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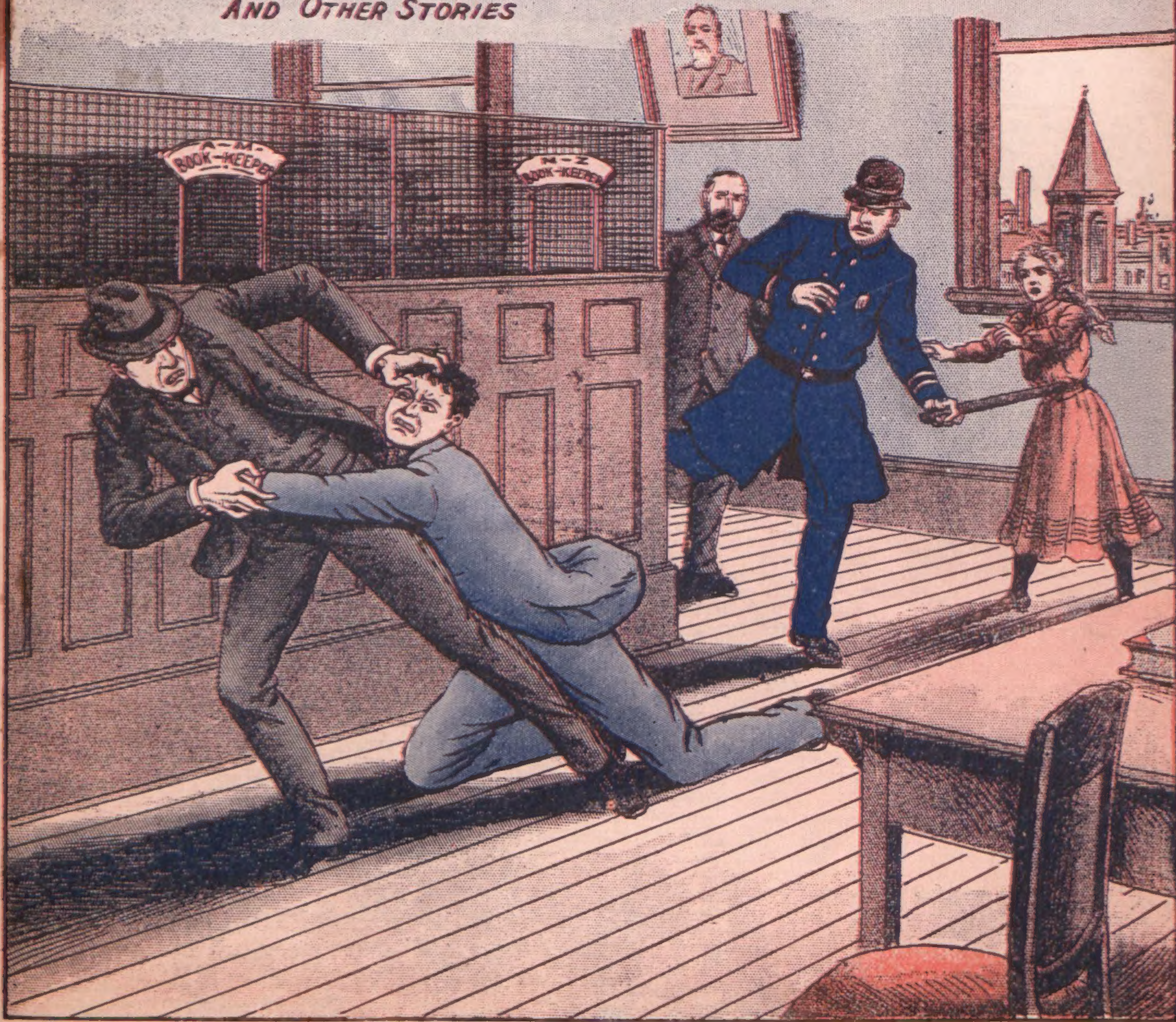
AUGUST 6, 1915

5 Cents.

FAME ^{AND} FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF
BOYS THAT MAKE MONEY.

THE LADDER OF FAME;
OR, FROM OFFICE BOY TO SENATOR, *By A SELF-MADE MAN*
AND OTHER STORIES



Redmond, white with fury, struck the boy a heavy blow in the face, knocking him down, and attempted a dash for the door. Stanton, however, recovered himself in time to grasp the rascal around the waist, and a desperate struggle ensued.

induced to quit Shoreham, he stifled his eager anticipations of a more energetic life, contenting himself after a fashion with the reflection that he was still young, and that things would come his way in course of time.

As he and Mr. Deering walked down to the landing-stage they both realized that it was an awful night to go upon the water; but the boy had weathered some heavy gales on the bay before, and he was satisfied he could keep the Gull right side up in anything save perhaps an out-and-out hurricane.

It was a pretty dark night, the wind rushed in from the big bay outside at a forty-mile clip, and the waves kicked up alongshore could be seen dashing their white, yeasty heads upon the hard sand with a measured roar that sounded anything but comforting to the ears of the fishermen's wives whose husbands and sons were out at sea that night.

Mr. Deering, with a pardonable nervousness, questioned the young skipper of the Gull in regard to the boat in which they were to venture upon the stormy bay and the dangers they would encounter on their trip to Coffin Island.

George's replies were so satisfactory that the gentleman felt his courage rise to the occasion, though he never would have undertaken the watery passage but for the serious errand he was engaged upon.

"You seem to be a thoroughly proficient boatman, young as you are," said Mr. Deering. "Indeed, Mr. Bates, the proprietor of the inn, assured me that you were well posted in the peculiar seamanship necessary for the safe management of a sailboat, and that you knew every shoal and rock in the bay."

"Well, sir, I think he didn't tell you any more than the truth," replied George modestly.

"I consider myself very fortunate in having met you, then," answered Mr. Deering. "I should never forgive myself if I did not make a special effort to reach my brother's bedside before he breathed his last. I pray heaven we may arrive at the island in good time. If you put me through all right, my young friend, I will not only double my original offer, but be much obliged to you besides."

"I'll do the best I can, sir," replied George, delighted at the prospect of getting \$20 for his services; "but you can see that it blows pretty heavy, and there is an ugly sea running. However, the Gull is as stiff as oak and iron can make her, and she works like a lady in a sea. Now, sir, if you will step aboard, we'll put off at once."

Mr. Deering showed that he was not much used to boats and salt water by the gingerly way he essayed to step into the cock-pit of the sailboat as she rose and then fell away under the action of the heaving waves.

George saw that he was likely to lose his balance if he stepped down at the wrong moment, so he took him by the arm and assisted him in.

"Thank you, my lad. I'm rather a novice at this business," said Mr. Deering with a smile.

The young skipper pulled aside the sliding door to the cuddy and invited his passenger to enter and thus protect himself from the cold wind and dashing spray.

The gentleman was very glad to do so.

He found the little cabin was large enough to contain two berths and other conveniences, and that it was as clean and neat as a new pin.

George left him to get the boat under way.

He first put a couple of reefs in the mainsail and then hoisted it.

Having made fast the sheets, he cast off from the wharf, and the Gull darted off seaward like a frightened bird skimming the surface of the water.

At the very start she caught a heavy flaw and heeled over till her washboard was nearly submerged.

"Don't be alarmed, sir," said the boy, seeing the startled face of his passenger appear at the half-open entrance to the cuddy. "There's no danger."

"I was afraid we were going to capsize," replied Mr. Deering, whose nerves were somewhat shaken by the heeling over of the boat.

"No, sir. That was an unexpected slant of wind, that's all. I eased her at once and she came up like a duck. The Gull is good for a bigger blow than this. You see she jumps the waves like a feather. You'd better lie down, sir; you'll be more comfortable."

Mr. Deering thought the young skipper's advice good, and he retired out of sight.

George, enveloped in his oilskins, with his sou'-wester pulled well down over his eyes, sat on the weather side of the tiller peering forward into the night.

The boat breasted the big waves like a mass of solid oak, and, though the spray dashed furiously over her as she leaped

over the angry billows, George Stanton felt as safe in her as he would in the kitchen of his mother's cottage.

The wind was east and the sky was overcast, which made the night exceedingly gloomy and dark.

The intrepid young boatman could only make out the somber outlines of the islands and the headlands of the main shore; but these were sufficient to enable him to lay his course.

The roaring of the wind, the surging of the waves and the thumping of the boat against the choppy sea were the only sounds to be heard.

On flew the Gull till the receding of a curving point of land, which somewhat sheltered Shoreham village from the full sweep of the Atlantic winds, opened up the bright glow of the Coffin Island light—a stationary white light.

The young skipper headed directly for it.

As the minutes flew by, if there was any change in the weather it was for the worse.

The rain began to fall, and the gale seemed to grow more violent, tossing the Gull about like a cork.

A small boat going before the wind makes worse weather than on any other tack, and George Stanton had his hands full to keep her up to her course.

"This is a tough night," the boy muttered to himself, "a good bit worse than I had calculated on. I guess it's worth all of \$20 to go off to Coffin Island on such a night. Still, if the mast holds, and I don't see why it shouldn't, we'll get there all right."

The wind and waves seemed in league to prevent the consummation of Mr. Deering's purpose, but the young skipper was not frightened off.

Through it all the stanch little boat pushed her nose seaward, gradually nearing their destination.

The island loomed larger and larger ahead, and the bright, gleaming shaft of light grew bigger and brighter through the steaming atmosphere.

At last the boat was sheltered from the fierceness of the blast under a bluff, and soon afterward came into the comparatively still water of a little cove, where a small wharf, the only landing place on the island, projected to the west.

By the exercise of the same good judgment which had enabled him to bring the little craft in safety through the darkness and storm to her destination, George Stanton laid the Gull alongside the wharf and secured her.

Mr. Deering had come to the entrance of the cuddy as soon as he was sensible of the easier motion of the boat, and was therefore all ready to step on shore.

"Now, sir, you may come out, and I'll help you on the wharf," said the boy.

His passenger eagerly obeyed his summons.

"You have done well, my boy," he said, grasping George's hand. "I doubt if any boatman alive could have done better. I am very grateful to you."

Then they stepped up on the wharf and started for the gray walls of the lighthouse, which rose through the driving rain a few yards distant.

CHAPTER II.

THE RED POCKETBOOK.

As Mr. Deering walked up to the door to knock, George Stanton glanced in through one of the windows on the ground floor.

He saw a young, ill-favored looking man standing by a stove with a red pocketbook in his hand, the contents of which he seemed to be investigating with eager attention.

Just then Mr. Deering knocked loudly.

George saw the man inside give a violent start and conceal the wallet in the breast of his shirt while he turned a startled look at the door.

He made no move to answer the knock, but stood in a listening attitude, his features working in a strange, nervous manner.

Howard Deering knocked again, louder than before.

George Stanton, whose attention was fascinated by the curious suspicious movement of the man inside, saw him stoop suddenly and thrust the red pocketbook under an empty keg which stood against the circular wall and then come forward to the door.

He reached it just as Mr. Deering knocked for the third time, somewhat impatiently.

The man opened the door a few inches.

"Who's there, and what do you want on the island at this hour?" he asked in a surly tone.

"I am Rodney Deering's brother Howard, and I have come from Boston in answer to a telegraphic message that he was ill unto death and wanted to see me," replied Mr. Deering. The man, apparently the assistant lightkeeper, opened the door grudgingly and permitted the visitor, with George at his heels, to enter the lighthouse.

"Is my brother still alive?" Mr. Deering asked eagerly.

The man nodded.

"Thank heaven for that," said the gentleman, fervently.

"He is asleep at present," the man said, watching his visitors with a shifty eye, which the observing young skipper of the Gull did not much fancy.

"This fellow is not to be trusted," he thought. "I wonder why he hid that pocketbook under the keg? That wasn't the act of an honest man."

"Where is my brother?" asked Mr. Deering, with a pathetic look around the room.

"In his bed on the floor above."

"I may go up there, may I not?"

The man nodded.

"Are you the assistant keeper?"

"I am."

"Your name is——"

"Jim Redmond."

"Redmond!" exclaimed Mr. Deering. "I have a clerk in my employ named Redmond—Philip Redmond. Is he——"

"He is my brother," replied the assistant keeper, without manifesting any particular interest in the matter.

"Ah, indeed. I was not aware he had a brother. He never mentioned that fact to me. I am glad to know you, sir. I will go upstairs, if you will pilot the way."

Jim Redmond hesitated a moment.

He shot a suspicious glance out of the corner of his eyes at George Stanton, who was in the act of removing his oilskins and sou'-wester, and then his look wandered over to the keg beneath which he had hidden the red pocketbook.

He seemed loath to leave the room while the boy remained there.

The young skipper noticed both looks, though he did not appear to do so.

Indeed, there was little that ever escaped the notice of his sharp eyes.

He would have made an excellent detective, for his powers of observation and deduction were remarkably keen.

Redmond, however, saw that he could not well refuse to show the visitor upstairs, so he reluctantly led the way up the circular iron stairway which communicated with the upper regions of the lighthouse.

"There's something very strange about that pocketbook," mused George, looking at the keg in a thoughtful way. "Something very strange, indeed. It is none of my business, and yet something tells me that all is not right about it. Can it be that wallet belongs to the dying man upstairs, and that this Redmond has stolen it and expects to make use of its contents after Rodney Deering's death? It is very possible. I don't like his looks for a copper cent."

George could hear the footsteps of the two men on the floor above, and then there was silence.

Some strange fascination drew the boy nearer to the keg which hid the wallet.

"I have no right to be so interested in this matter," he exclaimed impatiently. "Probably there is nothing in it. Only a freak of my imagination. And yet——"

His eyes sought the floor around the keg.

A tiny rim of red projected from under it, showing that in his haste Redmond had not wholly hidden the pocketbook.

No one, however, would have noticed this unless, like the lad, he had seen what had occurred at the moment after Howard Deering knocked on the lighthouse door.

Stanton thrust his hands into his pocket and started to walk to the window to look out into the night; but he hesitated and looked at the keg once more.

"I can't stand this," he breathed at last. "I must have a look at that wallet."

With the alertness of a person who was afraid of being caught in a mean act, George knelt down, lifted the end of the keg and drew out the pocketbook.

The first thing he noticed was the name "Rodney Deering" stamped in gilt letters across the flap.

"It is the sick man's pocketbook, after all," he whispered. "Jim Redmond seems to be a thief."

George undid the flap and looked into the book.

It contained a number of bills—probably \$100 in all—and several papers.

The boy looked through each compartment until he came to the last.

Here he saw a piece of parchment, yellow with age.

It had such a curious look that George drew it out to examine it.

At that moment he heard the heavy boots of Redmond on the iron stairs coming down.

In his haste to close the wallet and return it to its hiding place he failed to notice that the bit of parchment had dropped to the floor until he had put the pocketbook back under the keg.

It was too late then to replace the time-worn document, so he snatched it from the plank and thrust it into his pocket just as Redmond's head appeared below the level of the ceiling.

Whether the lightkeeper's assistant had seen the action or not Stanton could not say, but he certainly regarded the lad with a good deal of suspicion when he stepped into the room.

He made no remark, however, but went over and sat down on the keg, which he regarded for a moment attentively to see if it had been moved.

Possibly satisfied that it had not been disturbed, he took out his pipe and a package of smoking tobacco and started to fill his pipe.

"It's a rough night," he growled out at last, feeling called on to say something.

"Yes," answered the young boatman, "one of the roughest I've ever been out in."

"Are you a boatman?"

"I might be considered as such, and I might not. I own a catboat, in which I often take people out sailing and fishing on the bay. I wouldn't have ventured here on such a night as this only that Mr. Deering was afraid his brother might die before morning, and he was very anxious to see him alive."

"He won't live till mornin'," replied Jim Redmond gloomily. "He's most gone now."

"That's too bad," said Stanton, in a sympathetic tone.

"I dunno," answered the man meditatively. "It will probably be a good thing for his little girl."

"His little girl!" ejaculated George, in a tone of some surprise.

"Yes," nodded Redmond. "He has a daughter about fourteen years old. His brother, who is well off, I understand—a Boston merchant—will look after her, I guess."

"Where is she?" asked the boy, interestedly.

Redmond jerked his thumb upward as if to intimate that she was upstairs with her dying father.

"Her mother——" began George.

"Dead these ten years," replied Redmond, blowing out a cloud of smoke.

"How long has Rodney Deering been on this island?"

"Six years. Three as assistant and three as head keeper."

"What is the nature of his illness?"

"A kind of quick consumption. Caught a bad cold four months ago, and it's fetched him."

Judging from the speaker's manner, he did not seem to be particularly distressed by his comrade's misfortune.

At that instant there was heard the soul-stirring cry of a man above; a moment of silence and then a poignant girlish wail floated down to them.

George started and looked toward the stairs, while Redmond half rose from the keg, his face turned an ashen hue, and the pipe trembled in his fingers.

"What was that?" asked the boy, almost knowing what the answer would be.

"That!" replied Redmond, recovering himself. "That was Flossie's voice. He's gone, I reckon."

"Gone!" answered Stanton mechanically.

"Yes. Dead!"

CHAPTER III.

"I'LL HAVE YOUR LIFE!"

Jim Redmond was right.

Rodney Deering was dead after a largely misspent life.

Not that he had been a bad man; no, only headstrong and impatient of restraint.

He had left home when quite young, after a quarrel with his father, and from that day until the hour he telegraphed his condition to his brother Howard at Boston no word had ever been received from him.

For some years he was regarded as having passed out of this life; but this impression was not correct.

Just why he had refused to divulge his whereabouts to

his family even after he got his position on Coffin Island, in Boston Bay, was a puzzle he did not explain up to the moment his breath failed him forever.

He seemed to be glad to see his brother when Howard Deering's coming awoke him from his last sleep on earth.

What he had to say, however, during those few precious moments yet remaining to him, had reference entirely to his daughter, Flossie, who knelt in tearful sorrow by his cot, watching the sable pinions of the Angel of Death close in about her only living parent.

The one soft spot in Rodney Deering's heart was filled with his only child.

In all probability he would have died without giving a sign of his existence to his family but for her.

The certainty of his death brought the problem of her future before him so he sent for his brother Howard.

And Howard in answer to his eager appeal promised to care for the girl as if she was his own.

"She is not penniless," whispered the dying man, with a strange light in his eyes. "No, no; not penniless. You will find in my red pocketbook—I have it here," and he tore open his shirt and searched with a feverish eagerness for the wallet that Jim Redmond had stolen from him while he was asleep and Flossie's attention was diverted.

He could not find it, and his excitement grew intense.

Every fiber of his attenuated frame trembled.

Howard tried to calm him, but he might as well have tried to still the storm that tore around the lighthouse.

"Where is it?" he almost shrieked. "Where is it—Flossie's treasure? My heavens! I have been robbed, and by—"

Before he could frame the name of the thief a racking cough seized upon him.

He struggled like a madman with it.

Then a gush of blood started from his lips, he waved his hands wildly in the air, gasped and fell back—dead.

Flossie, with a heartrending cry of grief, threw herself upon her father's body and sobbed as if her little heart would break.

Howard closed his brother's glazing eyes, and then tried to comfort the orphan girl, who thenceforth was to live with him.

But what words can alleviate such a sorrow as hers at its acute stage?

It must take its course, and so until the gray dawn lightened up the eastern sky Flossie was inconsolable.

Then exhausted nature came to her relief and she closed her eyes in sleep.

Soon after George Stanton became aware that Rodney Deering was really dead he began to feel tired and sleepy. He went to the window and looked out.

The rain had stopped and the gale seemed to be breaking up.

"Mr. Deering won't want to return before morning," he thought. "I may as well go down to the boat and turn in for the rest of the night."

So he told Jim Redmond to tell Howard Deering that he could be found on board his sailboat at the wharf.

The assistant keeper nodded and seemed to be relieved at the idea of the boy leaving the lighthouse.

George put on his sou'-wester, took his oilskins under his arm and left the place.

Curiosity, however, induced him to glance through the window when he got on the outside.

Jim Redmond still sat on the keg smoking his pipe, his eyes glued on the door.

At length he got up, tilted the keg and took up the red pocketbook.

He looked cautiously all about the room before he opened it.

Eagerly he examined each of the compartments until he came to the last, which he found to be empty.

He stared at it in a dumfounded kind of way for several moments, then he threw the wallet on the floor with an angry oath and sprang to his feet.

Stanton waited to see no more.

"It must be the bit of parchment I have in my pocket that he is after," he said to himself, in an eager whisper. "What earthly use can he have for an old time-stained bit of paper? I must examine it at the earliest chance and see if I can find in it the key to his anxiety to possess it. At any rate, I am glad I have it, for if it has any value it is now Flossie Deering's right to benefit by it."

He thrust his hand into his pocket, where he had put it, and drew it forth.

"I'll place it for safety in my wallet."

He took out a small well-worn black pocketbook, removed the rubber band and placed the bit of parchment inside.

"I'll look at it in the morning," he said, as he started to return the wallet to his pocket.

His hand struck on his hip and the pocketbook flew downward and disappeared in a crevice in the rocks.

"My gracious!" he exclaimed in a tone of consternation.

He knelt down and tried to insert his fingers into the hole, but he could not push them far enough in to even touch the wallet, which of course he could not see.

"What shall I do now?" he asked himself, not a little dismayed. "It would be fierce if I should not be able to recover my pocketbook with that parchment. Who knows but it might represent a fortune for Rodney Deering's daughter. I must mark the spot somehow and come back here after it in the morning."

He gathered a heap of stones together and made a little mound.

Then he took accurate bearing of the spot and stepped on to the wharf, which was close at hand, to go to his boat.

An hour afterward a man slouched past that little mound of stones, and stalking stealthily across the wharf stepped on board the Gull.

This man was Jim Redmond.

Putting his ear to the cuddy entrance, which was partially open, he listened.

Seemingly satisfied with the state of things, he pushed the slide wholly back and softly entered the little cabin.

He glided to the bunk where George Stanton lay in a tired sleep and noted his deep breathing with great satisfaction.

Then he took up his clothes, article by article, and searched them carefully, but whatever he was in search of did not seem to present itself.

"What can he have done with it?" he muttered savagely.

"I am sure he has it, for I saw it in the pocketbook the moment Howard Deering rapped at the lighthouse door, and I then thrust the wallet under the keg. What a fool I was not to have retained it about me; but I was afraid Rodney would denounce me to his brother, for the moment he missed the paper I knew he would suspect me, in which case I should have been obliged to have turned my pockets out to prove my innocence. Still, why should this boy have taken that paper from the wallet? Is it because it looks so old and peculiar that it attracted his notice? Still, I am puzzled how he could have known the pocketbook was under the keg. I have it!" he cried, with a smothered oath. "He was looking in at the window at the time and saw me hide it there. He is evidently no better than a thief himself. It's a wonder he didn't take the money, too. I wouldn't have cared so much if he had, if he had only left that piece of parchment, which is of no use to him, but which in my hands—"

The young boatman moved uneasily in his sleep and the man drew back into the deeper shadows of the cuddy.

Stanton, however, did not awake, and Redmond continued his useless search.

"Blame him!" he cried at last. "What has he done with it?"

The words aroused the boy and he sat up.

His sharp eyes showed him that he was not alone.

"Who's there?" he demanded, reaching out and grasping the intruder by the sleeve of his jacket.

"I'm here," replied Redmond, drawing a clasp knife from his pocket and opening it with his teeth.

"Who are you, Redmond?"

"Yes, Jim Redmond."

"And what do you want here in the cabin of my boat?"

"What do I want? I want that piece of parchment which you took from the red pocketbook I hid under that keg on the ground floor of the lighthouse. Give it up, or by heavens, I'll have your life!" and he pressed the blade of his knife against the lad's throat.

CHAPTER IV.

STANTON STEALS A MARCH ON REDMOND.

"What are you talking about, Redmond? Are you crazy?" asked Stanton, conscious that he was in a very ticklish position.

"No, I am not crazy, and you know very well what I'm talking about. I want that piece of parchment, d'ye understand?"

"I haven't any piece of parchment," protested George.

"You can't lie out of it, young fellow. You looked in at the window, saw me hide the wallet under that keg, and when

I went upstairs with Deering you took advantage of my absence to take that wallet out from under the keg and examine it."

"You seem to know all about it."

"I do."

"All right, then, have it your own way."

"Hand over that parchment," hissed Redmond.

"How can I hand over what I haven't got?"

"I say you have got it. You've hidden it somewhere about this cuddy. Tell me where or——" and the speaker pricked the skin of Stanton's neck with the point of his knife.

"Hold on there, Redmond. You're carrying this joke too far."

"You'll find this isn't a joke if you don't do as I tell you," said the man fiercely.

"If you don't take that knife away from my throat you'll find this isn't a joke either," replied the boy, in a determined tone.

"Are you goin' to give up that parchment?"

"I can't give up what I haven't got."

"That bluff won't work with me."

"I'm not trying to bluff you. I haven't got what you're after."

Redmond found that he wasn't accomplishing much, and he was furious.

He was satisfied in his own mind that Stanton knew where the precious piece of parchment was, and he was determined to make him own up.

He gripped the boy closer with his left hand while with his right he again pricked George's neck with the sharp blade.

At that critical moment steps were heard on the wharf.

The sound distracted Redmond's attention for the moment and the young boatman, fully alive to his own interests, took immediate advantage of the chance.

With an upward movement of one of his arms he sent the knife spinning across the cuddy and grasped Redmond by both arms.

Just then Howard Deering stepped aboard the boat and poked his head in at the cabin door.

As it was pitch dark in the cuddy he couldn't see anything, but it seemed as if something strange was going on in there—something like a struggle between two persons.

He took a match safe out of his pocket and struck a light.

He was astonished at the sight which met his view.

George Stanton, in very scant attire, was trying to hold his own against Redmond, who was fully dressed.

"What does this mean?" asked Mr. Deering, lighting a second match.

His words and presence caused a cessation of the conflict.

Stanton let go of his aggressor and squirmed out of his reach.

"I'll get square with you yet, my young boatman," hissed Redmond, satisfied that he could do nothing more just then toward getting his hands on the coveted piece of parchment. "You haven't seen the last of this thing by a jugful."

With those words he brushed by Deering, pushed his way out of the cabin and left the boat.

"What's the trouble, my lad?" asked the Boston merchant, after he had watched Redmond retire from the cuddy.

"The trouble is that I woke up to find that fellow in here rummaging around the place. He came after a bit of parchment which he says I took from a red pocketbook he had hidden under a keg in the ground floor room of the lighthouse."

"A red pocketbook!" exclaimed Mr. Deering, recalling his brother's dying words. "The last words my brother spoke referred to a red pocketbook on which he seemed to place great value. He was going to show it to me, when, not finding it on his person, where he evidently had been accustomed to keep it, he frantically declared he had been robbed by some one whose name he was unable to mention on account of a violent spell of coughing, which ended in his death."

"The thief was Jim Redmond, the man who just left this boat."

"How do you know?"

"Because I saw a red pocketbook in his hands, and I afterward discovered that the name of Rodney Deering was on the flap."

"Then he must be made to yield it up, since everything that belonged to Rodney is now the rightful property of his daughter Flossie."

"If you will listen, sir, I will tell you how I came to know that Redmond had possession of the red pocketbook."

"Certainly I will listen to you."

Thereupon Stanton told Howard Deering all that the reader is familiar with in respect to the stolen wallet up to the moment George placed the piece of parchment in his own pocket-book and then accidentally let it fall into the hole among the rocks.

Deering was not only interested, but somewhat excited over the recital.

"It must have been the parchment, and not the small amount of money in bills, to which my brother referred. The parchment contains some valuable secret, otherwise that rascal, Redmond, would not be so eager to get possession of it."

"That's the way I looked at it, sir. And now, owing to my carelessness, it is liable to be lost. However, I marked the spot with a small pile of stones and am in hopes of recovering it in the daylight. Should I be so fortunate as to be able to do so I shall hand it over to you at once. It would not be safe for me to retain it a moment longer than necessary, for that fellow believes I have hidden it on this boat, and he will not rest till he has made another and more thorough search."

A slight noise at the opening of the cabin caused Stanton and Mr. Deering to turn their eyes in that direction, and just in time to see a dark object, which they knew must be the head of Jim Redmond, draw away from it.

"The rascal has been spying on us, and he has probably heard every word of our conversation," said George, in a tone of disgust. "I doubt if it will do him much good, so far as getting on the track of the lost parchment, for I did not mention the exact spot where I dropped my own wallet. The best thing you can do is to demand your brother's wallet, containing the money, from him. I am a witness to the fact that he has it. Should he refuse to turn it over to you you can threaten him with arrest."

"I will do that; but he may defy me. I shall have to remain on the island while you go to the village, notify the government authorities of the death of my brother and bring over an undertaker to take charge of his remains. The rascal may make his escape in a boat while you are away."

"I shall try to recover my pocketbook before I go. As you will have to remain on the island with Redmond it would be better for me to take the parchment with me if I find it, otherwise he would certainly attack you to get possession of it."

"You are right," agreed Mr. Deering. "Take it with you by all means, if you recover it. It might be of sufficient value to tempt the scoundrel to murder me for it while you were absent."

Morning was now beginning to dawn, so the young boatman put on his clothes, as further sleep was out of the question.

Mr. Deering said he would have to return to the lighthouse to look after his niece.

After he had gone, Stanton sat on top of the boat's half-deck and watched the sky lighten up.

By this time the gale had blown itself out.

The water of the bay, however, was still very much agitated and dashed quite noisily upon the rocky shore of the island.

The sky was fairly clear of clouds and promised a fine day.

George looked around for some sign of Redmond, but he was not to be seen.

"I wonder what will be the rascal's next move?" thought the boy. "He knows now that I had the parchment and lost it. He is hidden somewhere in this vicinity watching for me to begin the search for my wallet, and if I find it he is prepared to pounce upon me and try to get possession of it at all costs. I think I'll fool him. I'll start for the shore at once, get the undertaker and another man to come back with me, and then hunt for the pocketbook on my return. With three men on the island he would not dare attack me. Besides, I'll bring over father's revolver as an additional protection."

Having decided that this plan was the best, Stanton proceeded to put it into immediate execution.

He unmoored the Gull from the wharf, ran up the main-sail in a jiffy and steered out into the bay.

Hardly had he got clear of the wharf before he saw Redmond running rapidly down the rocks.

As soon as the rascal struck the wharf he saw that the young boatman had escaped him, and so he stopped and shook his fist at him, shouting out some words that the boy could not understand.

George paid no attention to the fellow, but laid his course direct for Shoreham village, hidden behind a distant point of land.

CHAPTER V.

REDMOND SCORES A POINT.

The young boatman made good time on his return trip and reached the landing-stage in front of his home a little after seven o'clock.

His mother was up and watching for him.

With the aid of her husband's spyglass, she had made out the Gull soon after she rounded the point, and she then hastened to get breakfast on the table, for she guessed George would have an uncommonly good appetite that morning.

She also noticed that the passenger he had carried to the island was not visible in the cockpit, so she judged he had remained at the lighthouse.

"Well, mother," her son said in his usual cheery tone, as he entered the kitchen, "you see I'm back all right."

"And I thank heaven that you are, my boy. I am sure that you found it a very rough night on the water."

"It was, indeed, mother. I don't think I've ever seen a much more one afloat. It was a good thing that I carried Mr. Deering over to the island, for his brother died a short time after we reached the lighthouse."

"I am very sorry to hear that," said the little widow sympathetically.

"His name was Rodney Deering, and he has left a little girl of fourteen for his brother to look after."

"Then the poor child is an orphan?"

"She is. Her mother died about ten years ago."

"It is fortunate she has this uncle who is willing to take charge of her."

"Yes, mother. He's pretty well off, I guess. He is a Boston merchant."

"The change from the island to a comfortable city home must prove advantageous to the child, though of course she is bound to miss her father. Sit up to the table now and eat your breakfast. Everything is ready and waiting. I dare say you are hungry after your sail."

"I should say I am. The sea air is uncommonly bracing this morning, and puts a fine edge on a fellow's appetite. Besides, I've got to return to the island as soon as I can."

"To bring back your last night's passenger and the little girl, I suppose."

"Probably so; but I've got to carry the undertaker and a coffin over with me, after I have notified the lighthouse inspector of the district that Rodney Deering, who was the head keeper of the light, is dead. By the way, mother, Mr. Deering promised me \$20 for last night's trip after he saw how rough the weather really was. He looks on it as a great favor that I was willing to carry him over in such a gale."

"Twenty dollars will come in very nicely at this time."

"Indeed it will," replied the boy, attacking the viands with great relish.

The boy said nothing about his adventure with Jim Redmond, for that would only worry his mother, particularly as he was going back to the island where the man was.

After breakfast he called on Mr. Mold, the village undertaker, and told him he had a job for him.

"Why, who's dead, George?" he asked in some surprise.

"The head keeper of the Coffin Island light. I'll take you over to the island in my boat after awhile. You'll want to take a coffin, of course."

"What size man is he?"

"Now you've got me, Mr. Mold. I couldn't tell you because I didn't see him. I should think he was about the average size."

"I'll take a box over, and fit him with a casket after we bring him back. Who pays the expenses?"

"The man's brother, who is over at the island now. He's a Boston merchant."

"All right," replied Mr. Mold. "When will you be ready to start?"

"Probably in about an hour," replied the boy.

"I'll be ready for you."

George had the address of the lighthouse inspector of that district, and he sent him a dispatch notifying him that Rodney Deering had died early that morning.

The undertaker and his assistant carried the box to the Gull.

"I'm afraid your boat is too small to fetch that box back

with the corpse in it in the way it ought to be carried. Can't you get a larger boat?"

"Well, there's Captain Mason's sloop. Perhaps I can induce him to take us over."

The boy went to Captain Mason's house and found that he was willing to go over provided there was something in it for him, and that George helped work the craft, as his son and assistant had gone to a neighbouring town.

Stanton agreed, but before they set off he got his father's revolver and placed it in his hip pocket, so as to be prepared to defend himself in case Jim Redmond was looking for trouble.

They reached the island about half-past ten o'clock and the undertaker and his helper carried the box at once to the lighthouse.

Redmond was nowhere to be seen.

Mr. Deering told George that the assistant light keeper had been hunting about the rocks ever since he (Stanton) left the island.

Of course, he was looking for George's lost wallet with the parchment in it, but there was no evidence that his search had so far proved successful.

While Mr. Mold and his man were attending to the body of Rodney Deering, Flossie was brought downstairs by her uncle Howard and introduced to Stanton.

She was a very pretty girl, with fair hair and nut-brown complexion, and a sylph-like figure.

Her eyes were red from weeping, and the expression of her countenance was very sad and depressed.

Stanton proposed that while the undertaker was getting the dead man ready for removal they go down to the spot where the lost wallet lay and see if they could recover it.

Mr. Deering agreed.

"Do you think you can locate the spot?" he asked, with great interest.

"I marked it with a pile of stones. It is not far to the right of the wharf."

The stones were found just as George had described them.

He moved them and disclosed a crevice in the rocks, at the bottom of which the wallet could be seen.

The fissure was too narrow for a person to insert his arm, so George told Mr. Deering that he would have to go down to the sloop and get a boat-hook that he had seen on board.

In a few minutes he returned with the article and tried to probe the wallet out.

This was no easy job to accomplish, and their attention was so much absorbed in the work that they did not observe the cautious approach of Jim Redmond, who had been on the watch behind a rock ever since the sloop made fast to the wharf.

"I don't know whether I can get it out or not," said George, after he had failed a dozen times. "It's a most exasperating job."

"Let me try," said Mr. Deering.

The boy resigned the boat-hook to him, but his efforts were not rewarded with any degree of success.

Finally he gave it up and the young boatman took another try.

At the second attempt George succeeded in catching the point of the hook in the rubber band.

"I've got it," he said triumphantly, and with the use of a little dexterity he brought the wallet to the surface. "There you are," he said, holding it out to Mr. Deering.

Before the gentleman could take it, Redmond dashed forward, snatched it from the boy's hand, and dashed away across the rocks with a derisive laugh.

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT THE PARCHMENT REVEALED.

The unexpected appearance of Jim Redmond took Mr. Deering and George completely by surprise, and for a moment they could only stare after the fleeing rascal, then the young boatman recovered his self-possession and started in pursuit.

He was as active as a young monkey on his feet and Redmond soon saw that he was being rapidly overhauled.

"I'll lead him away to the eastern end of the island and then put his nose out of joint," muttered the scoundrel, as he sprang forward from rock to rock, with an occasional brief glance over his shoulder at his young pursuer.

The rascal relied upon his greater strength to overcome the

boy at the proper moment, then with the parchment again in his possession he intended to get away from the island in a small boat belonging to the lighthouse, which was tied down at the wharf.

Stanton followed on Redmond's heels with the dogged resolve to wrest his wallet from him at all hazards.

He was thoroughly aroused against the fellow's perversity in trying to do the daughter of Rodney Deering out of what rightfully belonged to her alone.

Redmond presently struck a path that carried him down to the shore and out of sight of the lighthouse.

The boy was close at his heels when he turned a projecting rock and disappeared.

As Stanton himself rounded the rock he found Redmond crouching behind it ready to attack him.

The rascal struck George a stinging blow alongside of the head which staggered him, and immediately followed up his advantage.

"I've got you now where I want you," he hissed malignantly. "If you will butt in where you have no business you've got to take the consequences."

He sprang at the boy with a fierceness that clearly intimated his intention to do him up then and there.

George saw that he would not be in it with this burly rascal if he once got his hands upon him, so he dexterously evaded a hand-to-hand conflict by leaping aside.

Then he picked up a stone and fired it at Redmond.

The missile took effect on his shoulder, partially disabling his right arm, and wringing from him a howl of pain and fury.

"I'll kill you for that, you little monkey!" he roared, stooping down to retaliate on the same lines.

"Drop it!" commanded George, coolly, displaying his revolver and covering the man. "Drop it, or I'll put a ball into you."

Redmond straightened up surprised and discomfited at the appearance of things.

It was not a pleasant sensation to look into the menacing tube of a revolver leveled within a yard of his head.

It gave Redmond the cold shivers, for he was not overburdened with sand when the game was going against him.

"Turn that gun away, will you?" he snarled. "It might go off."

"If it goes off it will be your lookout," returned the young boatman.

"What do you want me to do?" growled the rascal.

"I want you to give up that wallet," demanded Stanton. "It's my private property, and you have no right to retain it."

"You can have it after I've taken out that piece of parchment that I want," replied Redmond, taking the wallet from his pocket and starting to remove the band.

"You have no claim on that parchment," said George. "It belongs to Flossie Deering, and you shan't remove it from my wallet."

"Then you don't get your pocketbook," cried Redmond, making a motion to return it to his pocket.

"Throw that wallet to me or I'll put a ball through your arm," cried Stanton, in a determined tone.

"You wouldn't dare," blared the rascal.

"Wouldn't I? I'll give you three seconds to do as I tell you. One—two—three!"

Redmond sullenly refused to comply, whereupon instead of aiming at the fellow's arm Stanton fired apparently directly at his head.

His object was to thoroughly unnerve the rascal if he could, and he succeeded.

The ball whizzed so close to Redmond's face that he dropped the wallet with a howl of fear and started to run.

"Stop!" shouted the young boatman after him.

He emphasized his command with a second bullet, which brought the villain to a terrified pause.

"Now," said George, after picking up his wallet and advancing on Redmond, "hand out Rodney Deering's red pocketbook, or I promise you the third bullet won't miss you."

Redmond glared furiously at his antagonist, but the revolver was an all-powerful persuader, and he slowly and reluctantly produced the dead man's property and threw it on the ground with a curse.

"I'll get even with you some day, you monkey!" he hissed. "You've done me out of a good thing, and I shan't forget it, not if I live to be a hundred."

"You can go now," replied George, coolly, after taking possession of the wallet.

He watched Redmond take his way along the shore, then he started in the opposite direction up the path by which he

had come, and soon reached the top of the rocks, whence he could see the lighthouse again and the advancing figure of Howard Deering, who had heard the pistol shots and was much concerned for the safety of the brave boy.

"Thank heaven you are safe!" exclaimed Mr. Deering, when he came up and grasped the young skipper by the hand.

"What were those pistol shots I heard?"

"They were fired by me," replied George.

"By you?"

"Yes. I brought over my father's revolver this trip, for I feared that I might have occasion to use it to defend myself against Redmond. Well, it came in handy. I came upon the rascal under the bluff, where I guess he expected to do me up, and I compelled him not only to give up my wallet, but also your brother's pocketbook. Here it is," and the boy handed it over to Mr. Deering.

"You are a boy in a thousand," exclaimed the merchant. "I did not expect to get that pocketbook unless I succeeded in rounding that man up with the help of a constable."

While he was speaking George was taking the parchment out of his own wallet.

He tendered it to Mr. Deering.

"No one would think to look at that bit of paper that it was worth taking care of," said the boy. "And yet Redmond has made several strenuous efforts to get it and hold on to it."

The merchant contemplated the soiled, creased and ancient-looking document with much interest.

It was a piece of paper, which from its two folds looked to be about six inches one way by four and a half the other, perfectly regular in its oblong shape, as though it had been prepared for some purpose.

The paper was firm, thick and whole, and seemed like a kind of vellum.

"It must be pretty old," Mr. Deering said, thoughtfully. "No one sees any such material nowadays to write upon. It was considerably used a hundred years ago by those who could buy it, scarce and dear as it was."

"If it was so very expensive," said Stanton, "I should think only important matter would be written upon it."

"Very likely this contains a secret of some value, or my brother would not have set such store by it as he seemed to do. There is hardly \$100 in money in the red pocketbook. When he spoke of Flossie not being penniless his manner indicated that her expectations represented more than that meager sum. Well, we will open it and see what this wonderful secret is."

He unfolded the bit of parchment with due care, George watching the operation with intense interest.

He naturally looked for some remarkable revelation.

The Boston merchant was not a little curious himself as to what the document contained.

Having spread it out carefully against the smooth face of a rock, they both gazed on it with eager curiosity.

To their surprise and great disappointment, nothing met their eyes.

The piece of parchment was blank.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM SHOREHAM VILLAGE TO BOSTON.

"Why, there's no writin' on it," cried the young boatman in some astonishment.

"It is certainly very singular," said Mr. Deering, gazing blankly at the paper. "The writing must have faded."

"Then the parchment isn't worth all the trouble it has caused us."

"Apparently not. It is an interesting relic, however, and as such I will keep it. Possibly some chemist might be able to bring out the writing again, for the ink used in olden times was more substantial than our modern article. Still I have no great faith that what was once written on this piece of vellum will ever be revealed."

Thus speaking, the merchant refolded the bit of parchment and returned it to the red pocketbook.

"Let us return to the lighthouse and help Flossie get her things in order for taking away," said Mr. Deering, placing the red wallet in an inner pocket of his coat.

Half an hour later George and Mr. Deering carried Flossie's small trunk with all her worldly possessions down to the sloop, where the box containing her father's remains had already been conveyed.

Jim Redmond did not appear until he saw that they were on the point of taking their departure, then George observed him walking toward the lighthouse.

In the offing a government tender was to be seen heading toward the island from the direction of Boston.

With Slaton's assistance the captain of the sloop hoisted the mainsail and subsequently the foresail.

The ropes which held her to the wharf were then cast loose and she glided away from the island under a fair breeze.

Flossie and her uncle sat on the extension roof of the cabin, with George Stanton, while Captain Mason steered.

Undertaker Mold and his men remained forward with the box.

"I am very glad to have met you, Stanton," said Mr. Deering, when the boat was well upon her way. "I don't think I could have got another skilled boatman to have taken me to the island last night. Therefore, I feel that it is due to you that I was enabled to see my brother before he died. The sum of \$20, which I promised you, scarcely expresses my sentiments, so I shall insist in making it \$50."

"No, sir. I cannot take so much from you for my services. I am perfectly satisfied with \$20."

"But it is my wish to give you \$50. By the time we land at Shoreham you will have lost the greater part of to-day, and for that you might receive some compensation."

"I think \$20 will cover everything, sir," smiled George.

The merchant shook his head, pulled out a well-filled pocket-book and tendered the young skipper of the Gull five \$10 bills, which the boy finally accepted with considerable reluctance, much as the possession of this amount of money meant to himself and his mother at that time.

"Now," continued Mr. Deering, "if there is anything I can do for you hereafter, I hope you will communicate with me," and he handed the lad his business card. "I suppose you do not intend to remain permanently in such a small place as Shoreham. A boy of your evident abilities ought to seek a wider field of usefulness."

"I should like very much to get a start in Boston, or some other large city," said George, voicing the desire that was nearest his heart.

"Nothing is easier, if your mind is set in that direction. I will be glad to make an opening for you in my office. I am about to make some changes that will necessitate my taking on new help. I am arranging to open a branch establishment in New York. I am going to send my chief clerk on there to act as resident manager. He will probably take a couple of the other clerks with him. Their places will be filled by promotion, which will naturally create several vacancies at the foot. I should be glad to have you step into one of them."

"I am very much obliged to you, Mr. Deering. If I can get my mother's permission for me to go to Boston I will gladly accept your offer."

"I will speak to your mother myself, if you wish, and point out the undoubted advantages that would accrue to you by getting a proper start in the world. I should think she would have no great objection to moving to Boston herself. There are many nice places to live in the suburbs of the city, and the electric cars afford quick and satisfactory communication with the business center."

"Well, sir, I should be pleased to have you do so. You and Miss Flossie can stop at our cottage, instead of going to the inn, while Mr. Mold is preparing your brother's body for shipment to Boston. Will you do so?"

"I accept your invitation with pleasure and shall be glad to meet your mother. I think I shall be able to convince her that the proper field for your talents is the city of Boston."

When the sloop arrived at her wharf George Stanton piloted Mr. Deering and his bereaved niece to his mother's cottage.

Mrs. Stanton received her visitors with all courtesy and proceeded to make their brief stay as pleasant as possible.

She was all sympathy and kindness to the young orphan, and Flossie's heart warmed to her at once.

She prepared a nice dinner for them, and during the meal Mr. Deering opened up the subject of the young boatman going to Boston and taking a position in his office.

While Mrs. Stanton was obliged to admit that Shoreham offered comparatively no inducements for an ambitious boy, she seemed loath to consider the proposition of moving to a Boston suburb.

She had been born, brought up and married in Shoreham, and she protested that no other place would satisfy her as well.

"I can understand that feeling very well, Mrs. Stanton," replied Mr. Deering; "but remember you must consider your son's future. The world wants just such bright and energetic boys as your boy George is, and it is doing him an injustice to bury him in this antiquated village."

This was putting the matter right up to her in a way that she could not very well evade, and so she promised to think the subject over, at the same time thanking the merchant for the interest he was taking in her son.

At five o'clock a buggy was brought around to the cottage to take Mr. Deering and Flossie on to the next town, where they would catch a train for the city, a wagon conveying Rodney Deering's body in a casket, enclosed in a plain box, to the station.

"I shall expect to hear from you in a few days, Stanton," said the merchant as they were about to part. "At any rate I shall keep a place open for you."

"Thank you, sir. I hope I shall be able to go to work for you."

Flossie cried on leaving, for she had taken a great liking to Mrs. Stanton.

"Whatever your decision is, Mrs. Stanton," said Mr. Deering, "you must call and see Flossie after she is settled with my family."

Then the buggy drove away.

That night after tea George and his mother had a serious talk about his branching out in life, but no decision was reached.

A day or two later Mrs. Stanton received a letter from her only sister, a widow, in which the latter said she had decided to move to Shoreham, so as to be near her, and asked her to look up a small cottage for her and her two children.

This letter suggested a plan to George.

"Mother, why don't you have Aunt Bertha come and live with you? Then I could go to Boston, and you need not leave Shoreham at all. I could run down once a week and remain with you till Sunday night. The distance is not far. Don't you think that such an arrangement would solve the whole difficulty?"

"But I don't like to have you away from me for a whole week at a time," objected the little widow, stroking her son's hair. "I should miss you dreadfully."

"You'd get used to that, mother, especially as you would know it was for my good. There is nothing in Shoreham for me. I am only wasting my time here. It has been my dream for months to break away from this village and get into the bustling world, where a fortune is to be made by those who have the grit and determination to push their way to the front."

"And you would really be contented to go away from mother and live among strangers, George?" she asked tearfully.

"I must do it some day. Why not now, when such a fine opportunity has presented itself," he said, putting one arm lovingly around her. "Remember you are not really losing me. Boston is only a short distance from here, and you will know that I am in good hands when I am with Mr. Deering."

Mrs. Stanton, like all fond mothers, hated to part with her only son, even under such exceptionally favorable circumstances; but in the end she yielded to his solicitations.

Her sister agreed to come and live at the Stanton cottage, and then George wrote to Mr. Deering that he had obtained his mother's sanction to his coming to Boston.

And so ten days later George Stanton became office boy for Howard Deering, and took up his home with a respectable family in East Cambridge, not far from where Mr. Deering lived himself.

CHAPTER VIII.

GEORGE STANTON'S EXPERIENCE AS OFFICE BOY.

Howard Deering was general sales agent for a big hosiery mill in a Massachusetts factory town, and his salesrooms and counting-house was in the heart of Boston's busiest district.

His trade had grown extensively in the last few years, as the product he controlled became more and more in demand throughout the country.

He had just established a branch in New York, with a full line of stock, where heretofore he had only maintained a small sale office with samples on exhibition.

Mr. Deering had taken a great liking for George Stanton.

He saw that the boy had the making of a smart man in him, and he determined to push him ahead as fast as circumstances permitted.

Realizing that the lad would be brought in contact with many temptations to which he had been a stranger in the quiet little village of Shoreham, the merchant tried to surround him with the best home influences.

To this end he had personally interested himself in securing

the boy a good home not far from his own, and he further invited George to call at his home at least once a week to take dinner and spend the evening.

Thus Stanton came into contact with Flossie very often, and they soon became very warm friends.

Mr. Deering had no objection to their growing intimacy; indeed, he rather encouraged it, for he knew that a pure, lovable girl can exercise a powerful influence for good over a boy thrown constantly in her society.

George found his duties as office boy congenial enough, for he had many chances to learn the business.

He did not have to get down at an unusually early hour to sweep out, as some office boys had to do, as there was a porter to attend to that.

The first thing he did every morning was to take a small leather bag and go to the post-office for the early mail, which he deposited on Mr. Deering's desk for that gentleman to go through when he arrived at about ten o'clock.

His time was chiefly taken up running errands, and this at first was a difficult matter, for he was unfamiliar with the Boston streets, which in the city proper are not the straightest in the world, although the big fire partially remedied the "cow-path" nuisance of Old Boston.

He also assisted the cashier and carried the day's deposits to the bank.

He was likewise at the beck and call of the bookkeepers and higher clerks.

George, being naturally obliging and even-tempered, soon made himself popular with his associates.

There was one exception, however, as always seems to be the case in a big office.

This exception was Phil Redmond, the brother of Jim Redmond, with whom Stanton had had the run-in with on Coffin Island.

Redmond was one of the bookkeepers, a rather good-looking, dashing kind of fellow, up-to-date in his manners and attire; in fact, he was the best-dressed clerk in the office.

He received a very fair salary, out of which he could easily have saved money had he been of a sensible, provident turn of mind, for he had no family responsibilities to make inroads on his resources.

But Phil never seemed to have a cent except on salary day.

The trouble was Redmond was something of a fast young chap.

He associated with a pretty rapid crowd, and had acquired a number of expensive habits that obliged him to scratch hard to make ends meet.

As a matter of fact, ends did not meet with him and were getting further and further apart every day.

He frequented gilded pleasure resorts at night, drank freely, smoked good cigars, played the races with varying luck, never missed a good show, and conducted himself generally as might be expected of a young man about town.

If he possessed cash enough he would have been a high-roller of the first water; but not being so fortunate he had to content himself with putting up as good an imitation of the real article as he was able.

Recently he had taken to gambling to try and better his financial condition.

He had skill and nerve, but more often than not he was a victim of sharper men at this business than himself, and consequently he was gradually getting deeper and deeper into difficulties, as a good part of his weekly wages went to square himself with his creditors.

Just why Redmond took a seated dislike to George Stanton would be hard to explain; but the fact remains that he did.

He was continually finding some fault with the bright office boy.

Stanton's growing popularity in the office annoyed him, probably because he was not exactly popular himself.

At any rate, he lost no opportunity to make life miserable for the lad, as the saying is.

Fortunately for George, Redmond was not such an important factor in the establishment that he could do the boy any great harm.

Flossie, who took her place in Mr. Deering's household just as if she had been his own daughter, developed a habit of coming to the city on a Saturday afternoon and dropping in at the office to see George.

At first the object of her frequent visits was not suspected by the employees of the house.

They were all very much interested in the pretty face and charming manners of the little orphan, whose recent bereave-

ment, as shown by her black gowns, appealed to their sympathies.

Her naturally vivacious nature occasionally showed itself in flashes through the somber atmosphere which her father's death had drawn about her.

Every one could readily see that she was bright and clever, and all the clerks liked to exchange a word with her when she appeared at the office.

Phil Redmond, as soon as he found out that she was Mr. Deering's niece, tried to make himself particularly agreeable to her; but somehow or another Flossie did not fancy him for a cent, and she made no secret of her feelings on the subject, much to the bookkeeper's disappointment and annoyance, for he prided himself on being irresistible with the fair sex.

The clerks soon began to notice Flossie's partiality for Stanton's society, and then they began to twit him about her.

Of course they did not know that he met her once, and sometimes twice, a week at Mr. Deering's home.

George took their fun good-naturedly, and after awhile they got tired of roasting him.

It was different with Redmond.

He resented the boy's familiarity with Flossie, the more particularly because he could not help seeing that she liked George better than anyone else.

He made remarks about their intimacy to his fellow clerks in a way that showed he was jealous of the office boy.

"Mr. Deering ought to know about it," he remarked one Saturday afternoon, when Flossie was talking to George, while he was copying some letters at the press for the cashier. "He wastes a whole lot of the boss's time with that girl every Saturday. Look at him now. He's been fifteen minutes monkeying over that letter-press and chinning to her. It ought to be stopped."

"I don't know that it is any of our business, Redmond," replied the bookkeeper he was addressing, who was very friendly toward Stanton. "It's up to Mr. Deering to find it out for himself. He's got eyes."

"Oh, he's up to his eyes in business these days. He doesn't see all that's going on out here. How could he, when he's in his private office most of the time?"

"That's all right, but there isn't much that escapes him, just the same," nodded the other bookkeeper in a conclusive way.

"Well, that seems to escape him," growled Redmond. "That kid makes me sick."

"Why do you call Stanton a kid? I think he's a pretty healthy-looking lad."

"He's too fresh."

"It seems to me that you're down on him for some reason."

"Well, I'm not struck on him," replied Redmond, with a sneer.

"What's the matter with him? As far as I can see he's the smartest office boy we've had since I've been here."

"Bosh!"

"All the fellows like him except you."

"I have the right to dislike him if I chose. I don't care for his face."

"Why not? Now that is just what I do like about him. He has got a wonderfully attractive face—a face that inspires confidence. I'd be willing to trust that boy with every cent I possess."

"You would, eh? Then that shows what a chump you are. Don't you know that the records of the police department show that faces are the most deceptive things one can go by. Those chaps, and he is one of them, who look as if butter wouldn't melt in their mouths, are the ones who do you up on the quiet, and then light out to Canada to save themselves from going to jail."

"I am sure you wrong Stanton if you entertain any such suspicion against him."

"Maybe I do," replied Redmond, with a short, unpleasant kind of laugh, "but just the same I wouldn't take any chances with him. I am always afraid of church-goers, and I understand he attends church and Sunday-school every Sunday."

"Then you ought to fight shy of me, Redmond, for I go to church regularly and I never missed Sunday-school when I was younger."

"There are exceptions to every rule," answered Phil, with a sickly grin.

"Then you ought to give Stanton the benefit of the doubt and not condemn him before he has done something to warrant your suspicions."

The appearance of Mr. Deering in the counting-room at that moment caused a cessation in the conversation between the two bookkeepers.

They both noticed that though he looked directly at Stanton and Flossie, whose heads were close together at the moment, he passed them by without a word.

CHAPTER IX.

DETECTING A CRIME.

Time wore on and George Stanton was promoted from office boy to an under clerkship.

He had given thorough satisfaction ever since he had been in the office, and Mr. Deering was well pleased with his progress and the proficiency he displayed.

Weather permitting, the boy never failed to pay his mother a weekly visit, and once in a while Mr. Deering permitted Flossie to accompany him, as she evinced a growing attachment for Mrs. Stanton, who treated her like a daughter.

Stanton had been a year in Mr. Deering's employ when he was transferred from the main room to the cashier's department.

He was given a desk back of the cashier in the brass-wired enclosure which heretofore had been solely occupied by that important employee.

Part of George's new duties was to go out and interview people who were behind in their payments, and to make collections.

In this line he soon proved remarkably successful, bringing in more money than his predecessor, who had occupied a desk on the outside of the enclosure.

Stanton continued on friendly terms with all the clerks except Phil Redmond.

He and Phil never spoke except when business compelled them to, and then their intercourse was of the briefest kind.

George was now eighteen and Flossie had developed into a lovely miss of fifteen.

The two were almost inseparable—that is, they were never tired of being in each other's society.

The girl continued to visit at the office, but not as often as before.

One day Flossie appeared at the counting-room unexpectedly about half-past twelve.

She had been shopping on Tremont street, and the idea had occurred to her that she would run down to the office and get George to take her to lunch.

Stanton was in his den, as he called the cashier's enclosure, and Flossie came to the little window and peeped through at him.

"I see you," she exclaimed, with a merry laugh.

"Goodness! Is that you, Flossie?" said George. "I didn't expect to see you to-day."

"Didn't you?" she replied, roguishly. "Well, I thought I'd give you a surprise."

"You've done it for a fact," he answered, putting his hand through the window and shaking her little gloved one. "I'm awfully glad to see you."

"Are you, really?"

"Don't you know I am?"

"Well," she said, cocking her head demurely on one side, "I'm not telling everything I know."

"That's a very wise resolution," he laughed.

"Are you very busy?" she asked.

"I am always busy during office hours, Flossie."

"I mean are you very busy at this moment?" she persisted.

"Why do you ask that question?"

"Because I want you to take me out to lunch."

"What, right away?"

"Yes, right away."

"You didn't come all the way from East Cambridge just to ask me to take you to lunch, did you?" he grinned.

"Of course not, you foolish boy! I've been up in the retail district shopping. I thought I'd sooner lunch with you than go alone into a restaurant, so I just came after you—there!"

"You have certainly done me a very great honor, Flossie," said George, smilingly; "but I'm not sure I can get off right away. Mr. Richards, the cashier, usually goes to lunch before me, and he hasn't started yet."

"Then I'm going to ask him to let you go first to-day. I'm sure he'll oblige me."

"That would hardly be fair to take advantage of his good nature."

"But I want you to go now," she persisted with a little willful pout, for she was now accustomed to have pretty much of

her own way with her Uncle Howard, who had grown very fond indeed of his dead brother's child.

"Here's Mr. Richards now. I'll speak to him."

Stanton stated the case and the cashier told him he could go to lunch then.

There happened to be no one in the counting-room at that moment but Phil Redmond.

He looked unusually tired and haggard, as if he had been up all night.

There was a restless, hunted look in his eyes, too, that seemed to indicate that his mind was ill at ease.

For the past week his face had worn a gloomy expression, and he had been taciturn and morose in his ways.

As he had had such spells before, no one took any notice of his conduct.

He went about his work in a mechanical manner that showed an absence of interest in his duties, but as he got through with his daily task in good shape no fault was found with him.

Flossie went into her uncle's private office to wait for George.

She left the door, which commanded a view of the cashier's enclosure, open.

Stanton went to the lavatory to tidy himself up, for now that Flossie was going to eat with him, he expected to patronize a more tony restaurant than the little one he was accustomed to go to.

The cashier remained in the enclosure engrossed with his duties.

At this juncture the telephone bell rang.

The office boy, who was eating his frugal lunch in the neighborhood of the booth, answered the ring.

After hearing what the voice at the other end of the wire wanted, he told the person to hold the wire, and started for the cashier's pen.

"Mr. Richards," said the boy, "there's a man on the 'phone who wants to see about an important order which he says has not been delivered according to promise. Mr. Deering is not in, so I guess you'd better talk to him."

"I guess I had," replied the cashier, coming out of the enclosure and slamming the wire gate to after him.

The gate to the enclosure was provided with a spring catch, which always held it secure, so that the cashier was obliged to use a key to let himself in.

This was a necessary precaution during business hours, as Mr. Richards frequently left his den for one reason or another, leaving his safe open and his money-drawer in the desk unlocked.

Of course there was not much danger that any one but Stanton, whose desk was within the enclosure, and who also carried a key to the lock, would attempt to enter the cashier's domain.

None of the other clerks had any right there.

Besides, any one in the counting-room could have seen an intruder had he made an attempt to go in there.

Still, as we have remarked, it was considered a necessary precaution to have the spring catch on the door.

On this occasion Phil Redmond was looking directly at the cashier's enclosure in a dreamy kind of way when Mr. Richards slammed the door to, as we have seen.

For some reason or another the catch on this occasion did not grip as usual, and the door swung open an inch and remained so.

Mr. Richards, being in a hurry to reach the 'phone, did not notice what happened, but Redmond did, and a peculiar alert expression sprang into his eyes.

He glanced about the empty counting-room and listened for a moment intently.

The coast was clear apparently.

The fact of the matter was, Phil Redmond needed a certain sum of money badly.

He needed it to prevent the exposure of certain things he was connected with, which exposure might ruin him by leading to his discharge from his situation, in spite of the length of time he had been with Mr. Deering.

He had been taxing his brains for the past week in a fruitless effort to devise means to secure the money in question.

He had about reached the despairing stage, and was wondering how he would come out of his difficulties, when the failure of the spring in the cashier's door to catch most unexpectedly pointed out a way for him to secure the money he wanted.

It was a desperate expedient, it is true, but Redmond was feeling desperate enough just then to attempt most anything.

It was a rare chance that would probably never happen again, and on the spur of the moment, urged on by his dire necessity, he determined to take advantage of it.

At that moment there was apparently no one about to see him, and by a little agility he felt he could reach the cashier's money-drawer and get away with whatever money was in it at the time, which he believed would amount to more than enough to help him out of his scrape.

Casting another sharp look around the counting-room and feeling reassured, he darted over to the enclosure, pulled open the gate, reached out to the cash drawer, opened it and grabbed a big pile of bills he saw there.

He thrust them into his pocket as he retreated and closed the gate softly.

This time the latch caught all right, and Redmond returned to his desk in guilty triumph.

Redmond thought he had abstracted the money from the cashier's drawer unperceived, but such had not been the case.

George Stanton's eye had been on him from the moment he entered the enclosure till he withdrew with the money in his fist.

The way it happened was this:

George, after washing up and brushing his hair neatly, had entered Mr. Deering's private room by a side door to notify Flossie that he was ready to go out.

Flossie had left the door facing the cashier's den partly open.

Stanton happening to take up his position at the proper angle to command a view of the enclosure, and accidentally casting his eyes in that direction at the critical moment, had seen Redmond's guilty act, and for a moment was too amazed to move.

He could scarcely believe the evidence of his eyes, so utterly unprepared was he for this discovery of Redmond's crookedness.

But he recovered his self-possession in a moment.

"Excuse me a moment, Flossie, I want to see the cashier," he said, and hurried toward the telephone booth.

Mr. Richards was too busily engaged at that moment to be disturbed, and Stanton waited for him to come out to impart to him the astounding revelation.

While he was waiting Phil Redmond got his hat and started to leave the office.

George detected his purpose in a moment.

"He mustn't leave the office with that money on him to dispose of or I shall never be able to prove that he took it," he breathed, as Redmond passed outside of the counting-room enclosure.

The resolute boy therefore hurriedly followed the thieving bookkeeper.

As Redmond turned the outside corner of the counting-room partition, Stanton glided up behind him and laid his hand on his shoulder.

The bookkeeper turned as if stung by some venomous insect, and his guilty conscience showed in his face.

"What do you want, Stanton?" he asked in shaky tones, as soon as he recognized the boy.

"I want that money you took from the cash drawer a moment ago," he replied, sternly.

"What do you mean?" quavered Redmond, his face turning a shade paler.

"I mean just what I said. You stole into the cashier's enclosure just now and helped yourself to all the money you could grab."

"You're a liar!" snarled Redmond, taking a step toward the office door.

"I'm not a liar, for I had my eye on you all the time."

"How could you, when there was not a soul in the counting-room?"

"You forget the door of Mr. Deering's private room. That was partially open and I was in there with Miss Flossie."

"Blame you! Take that!"

Redmond, white with fury, struck the boy a heavy blow in the face, knocking him down, and attempted a dash for the door.

Stanton, however, recovered himself in time to grasp the rascal around the waist and a desperate struggle ensued.

CHAPTER X.

SWEETHEARTS.

The struggle outside the counting-room immediately attracted notice, and both the cashier, who was leaving the booth at the moment, and Flossie, ran out to see what was the matter.

A policeman who was standing in the corridor outside also ran in to investigate the disturbance.

Redmond has fastened his hands on Stanton's throat and

was trying to choke him into releasing his hold upon his person.

The combatants swayed about, each desperately bent on accomplishing a certain purpose.

As soon as Flossie recognized that George was one of them, and that he was seemingly getting the worst of the encounter, she screamed and rushed to his assistance.

The officer, however, stepped in ahead of her, and grasping Redmond's two hands, tore them away from the boy's neck.

"Don't let him get away," gasped Stanton, as he sank back exhausted and panting for air.

"Oh, George! Dear, dear, George!" cried Flossie, throwing her arms impulsively about his neck and bursting into tears. "What has he been doing to you?"

Stanton offered no objection to her embrace, but he made no reply, for he could scarcely speak.

At that exciting moment Mr. Deering entered the office.

He was astonished at what he saw, and of course wanted an explanation.

Redmond, after making an ineffectual struggle to get away from the policeman, gave up the fight and stood sullenly awaiting his fate.

"What's the meaning of this, Redmond?" asked the cashier, clearly surprised at the situation, while Mr. Deering also showed his astonishment in his eyes.

The bookkeeper made no reply, since he had none that would stand muster.

Then it was that Stanton, releasing Flossie's arms from his neck, made his charge.

"If you will search Mr. Redmond you will find a bundle of money on his person which he took from your cash drawer."

"Impossible!" ejaculated Mr. Richards. "How could he reach the cash drawer? I was only away from the enclosure a moment, and the gate was locked."

"Nevertheless I saw him pull open the gate, steal into the place and grab a bunch of money. He cannot deny it."

"Is this true, Redmond?" demanded Mr. Deering, sternly.

The bookkeeper was silent, but his face admitted his guilt.

"Look into your drawer, Mr. Richards, and see if the money is missing," said the head of the house, quietly.

"There is no occasion to do that," sullenly spoke up Redmond, putting his hand into his pocket. "I admit my guilt. There is your money," and he held the roll of bills out to the cashier, who mechanically accepted it. "I suppose I shall have to go to jail for this, so the sooner it is over with the better."

"Why did you take that money, Redmond?" asked Mr. Deering, more in sorrow than in anger.

"Because I needed the money."

"Are you so badly off you must steal?"

"I am," replied the culprit, gloomily.

"Walk into my office, Redmond. I'd like an explanation of this matter."

"I have none to give you. I have ruined myself, and that is all there is about it."

"I'd like to talk with you at any rate. I am very sorry that this has occurred. I did not expect it of you after your many years of service in my office."

Redmond uttered a reckless little laugh, glared savagely at Stanton, and then followed his employer into the private room.

"I suppose I had better remain, hadn't I?" suggested the policeman.

"I think you had," replied Mr. Richards. "I should be glad to hear your account of this unfortunate affair, Stanton," he added, turning to the boy.

George made his statement, which, of course, was very brief.

"I can't understand how Redmond opened that gate," said the cashier in a perplexed tone, "unless he has been contemplating this crime for some time and had a key made to fit the lock."

"Are you sure that you shut the gate when you went to the phone, sir?"

"I am positive that I did. I remember hearing it slam behind me."

"Then he must have had a key," said the boy.

"I'll show you how I slammed the gate," said the cashier when he and George returned to the counting-room.

He opened the gate with his key and then shut it to as he had done when he was called to the booth.

Then to his surprise the mystery was unraveled, for the gate failed to catch and remained open one inch on the rebound.

"That accounts for it. We must get a locksmith at once, for the lock is evidently out of order."

Mr. Deering called the officer inside, told him he had decided not to press a complaint against his recalcitrant bookkeeper, and dismissed him with a \$5 bill.

Phil Redmond never returned to his desk.

He was quickly dismissed from his position, and another clerk was promoted to fill his place.

Mr. Deering told Stanton and his cashier to say nothing about the affair, but to leave the other clerks to believe that Redmond had resigned of his own accord.

The matter having been thus permanently disposed of, Stanton took Flossie out to their belated lunch, and he did not fail to tell the blushing girl how much he thought of her for making that effort of coming to his aid.

Stanton was rather glad than otherwise that Phil Redmond was out of the office, because he had long since given up the idea of ever getting upon a friendly footing, with the bookkeeper.

Flossie was also pleased to think he was gone, because she did not like his face.

None of the office force regretted his departure, because nobody liked him much.

So, on the whole, he was not missed even a little bit.

Flossie's unpremeditated demonstration that day in the office had duly impressed Stanton with the cheerful idea that the girl really thought a good deal more of him than appeared even on the surface.

He hoped this was true, as he had come to think a good deal of Flossie himself, and young as he was he had built air castles concerning the future in which the charming little miss figured conspicuously.

Things went along in the office very nicely now as far as Stanton was concerned.

He seemed to be growing smarter and brighter every day, and Mr. Deering was correspondingly well pleased.

Thus another year passed away and George, now eighteen, was trying to coax the down on his upper lip into something that faintly resembled a mustache.

Flossie had also advanced another year on the road of life, and was now sweet sixteen.

Stanton continued to call on Flossie at least once a week with unfailing regularity.

On one of these occasions he learned to his dismay that he was about to lose her for a time.

Flossie imparted the intelligence, with tears in her eyes, that Uncle Howard had arranged to send her to complete her education at a well-known boarding school for young ladies, situated fifty or sixty miles from Boston.

"Isn't it too mean for anything that I shan't be able to see you at the office any more after next week," she said, with a little lump in her throat.

"But that isn't the worst of it. You won't see me Thursday nights any more after next week," said George, soberly, feeling as if life would not be worth living.

"Will you miss me?" she asked, her pretty eyes filling up.

"Will I? You can just bet I shall. You are the one friend I think the world of, and when you leave Boston I shan't care much whether school keeps or not."

"Do you think so much of me as all that?" she asked, wistfully.

"I think more than that of you," said Stanton, stoutly. "I like you next to my mother. I like you just as much as if you was my real sister. Don't you wish you was my sister?"

Flossie was going to utter yes when it suddenly occurred to her that another girl in that case would be sure to take him away from her some time, and she didn't feel as if she wanted to give him up at all.

"You must write to me once a week, Flossie," he said, after they had talked the matter over a little while, "and I'll write twice a week to you."

"I'll write twice a week, too," said the girl eagerly, smiling through her tears.

"Maybe you won't have time to do that, so I'll only ask you to promise me one letter a week, but that one I'll expect."

"I promise," she replied; "but you'll write me two, won't you?"

"Sure I will."

"A. I'm going away a week from next Monday, you come and see me Sunday, and Tuesday, and Thursday and Sunday again. Will you?"

"Of course I will."

Before Stanton went away that evening he said that on the whole he was glad she wasn't his sister. That he'd much prefer to have her for his sweetheart. Would she be his sweetheart?

Flossie blushed, smiled and said she would.

Then George kissed her, said she was the finest little girl in the world, and that they would be sweethearts as long as they lived.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FIRST ROUND OF THE LADDER OF FAME.

George Stanton felt like a fish out of water after Flossie had departed for the boarding school.

Mr. Deering soon observed the change in the boy, and he decided to carry out a plan he had in view for some weeks.

His New York office had been growing more extensive in its operations, and the manager had requested additional help.

What he particularly wanted was a clerk familiar with the financial end of the business, so the merchant called Stanton into his office one day and asked him how he would like to go to New York as cashier of the branch office.

This was an unexpected and important advancement for the boy, and he was taken quite by surprise.

"I should like to go very much, sir, if you think I am competent to fill the position satisfactorily," replied George.

"I haven't any doubt about that, whatever," said Mr. Deering. "Well, we will look upon the matter as settled. You had better write to your mother about it at once. When you go down to Shoreham on Saturday you can remain a week and then I shall send you right on to your new duties."

Mrs. Stanton did not like the idea at all of having her son go so far away as New York, but as the die was cast, and the change too important for the boy to miss, she yielded to the inevitable.

Two weeks later George Stanton reached the metropolis of America and gazed upon the skyscrapers and other wonders of the big city for the first time.

He went to board with a very nice family in Harlem, near One Hundred and Twenty-fifth street, and it was not very long before he began to feel quite as much at home in his new surroundings as he had in East Cambridge.

He soon got acquainted with some very congenial young men who lived in his neighborhood, most of whom were members of a select social club that had rooms on Seventh avenue.

He was proposed as a member and duly accepted.

The Manhattan Social and Literary Club soon developed a political bias in favor of a gentleman well known in the district who was a candidate for nomination for the Board of Alderman.

The club gave an entertainment once a month, every other one of which, being a "stag" affair, went under the name of a "smoker."

It was at one of these "smokers" that the name of the gentleman who had the office "bee in his bonnet" was brought forward, eulogized and a resolution introduced and carried that the club support him in the event of his receiving the nomination.

This was Stanton's first insight into politics, and thenceforward he became very much interested in the outcome of the matter.

Finally the gentleman in question received the nomination, whereupon the club members got busy to help secure his election at the polls.

Stanton was of very little use in that direction, as he was a comparative stranger in the district, and such people as he knew were friends of the candidate.

But there were other ways he could help along the good cause, and as he proved both a willing and enthusiastic worker, he made himself well liked in the club.

He was introduced to the candidate, with whom he had the honor of shaking hands, and from whom he received words of thanks and encouragement.

He received invitations to attend "smokers" given by other clubs, generally purely political in character, some of which he accepted.

At a grand ratification meeting, held at the rooms of the district headquarters, he listened to the first political speeches he had ever heard in his life.

This style of oratory rather fascinated him, and he was easily induced to accompany a party of friends who had volunteered to visit different sections of the district in an express wagon, rigged up with painted cloth signs, and a couple of gasoline torches, and "spell" for the club's Aldermanic candidate.

Stanton wasn't expected to make any remarks himself, as he had not been coached in the campaign issues, but he had charge of the literature, and was relied upon to see that none of the naughty street boys who favored the opposition tore off or disfigured the candidate's lithograph.

He listened very intently to the speeches made by his friends and other, more important orators that were occasionally introduced, and soon was letter-perfect in all the important points advanced by the party whom the aldermanic nominee represented.

A few days before election there happened to be a dearth of speakers on the express wagon, and Stanton volunteered to help fill the awkward void.

He was permitted to do so, and his first political speech surprised not only himself but the two club friends who were on the cart with him.

"You're all to the good, Stanton," was the verdict of his companions, when he sat down and the wagon started for another corner to hold forth to a new audience. "You've got the issues of the campaign down fine. Who coached you?"

"Nobody," replied the boy. "I've kept my ears open and took in all I heard you fellows and the other speakers talk about."

"Upon my word," remarked one of the two, admiringly, "you didn't miss anything of any consequence. If our aldermanic candidate had heard you put it all over his opponent he would have been tickled to death. You've got a fine voice, all right, old fellow. It's a pity we didn't have you on the stump from the start-off."

They put him forward at all the other stopping places, so that he made six speeches that night.

After that Stanton spoke the remaining nights of the campaign, and was highly complimented by various professional speakers who heard him.

On election day he was appointed as one of the "watchers" at the polls, and it was noticed that he proved to be one of the most earnest and consistent workers for the organization that supported the club's aldermanic candidate.

He carried the results of the election district at which he had served to the clubrooms where the candidate received the returns.

It seemed a pleasure for him to report that in that district the candidate had a clear majority of the votes cast.

Finally about midnight, when it became clear that their man had been elected, a procession was formed, headed by a band of music, which had been engaged as soon as it became evident that things were coming their way, and that the alderman-elect at the head of the line, and the club members and other enthusiastic partisans walking behind, Stanton and his associates paraded the principal streets of the district and made Rome howl for a couple of hours, at the end of which the successful gentleman "set 'em up" for everybody.

The election was now a thing of the past and politics was relegated to the background once more in the club, but Stanton did not forget his small elocutionary triumphs, and resolved to be there with both feet the next time his services would be called upon.

In fact, politics had in that brief time acquired such a fascination for him that he joined the regular district organization, at the suggestion of the captain of his election district.

During the winter the organization, to keep the interest of the voters alive, gave monthly "smokers" at which entertainment was provided by professional vaudeville talent, interspersed by three-round bouts by clever amateur boxers, some of whom aspired to pugilistic honors.

George never failed to attend these affairs, and at the last he was induced to get up on the platform and make a speech on the political situation generally.

This was his first notable effort in that line, and he acquitted himself with such general satisfaction that he was called to say a few words more.

Many of the prominent politicians of the district were present on the platform on this occasion, and they were so favorably impressed with his oratorical powers that they made a point of the fact with the view of using this budding Demagogue when the occasion presented itself.

The leader of the district had Stanton introduced to him, and he in turn made the boy known to the other big lights, and it was generally admitted by the knowing ones that the boy was a comer.

Before spring came around every voter in the district had heard of or heard about young Stanton, and he had actually become quite popular, although he was unaware of the

fact. When he entered the organization clubroom of a night at the end of half of those present nodded to him in a familiar way,

while the leader and his aides always had a pleasant word to exchange with him.

His attractive personality had of course a great deal to do with this popularity.

He had such a sociable way about him and seemed such a good listener when any one was airing his private sentiments that no one could fail to like him.

During all this time Stanton gave great satisfaction to the manager of Mr. Deering's New York office.

He attended strictly to business during office hours, never made mistakes, and was considered the star clerk of the branch.

He maintained a regular correspondence with Flossie, who often bewailed the fact that he was so far away from her.

They met, however, during the Christmas holidays, George and his mother being guests at the Deering home for a week, and a very happy time the two young people had together, renewing their vows of eternal constancy.

CHAPTER XII.

STANTON BECOMES CAPTAIN OF HIS DISTRICT.

In the latter part of the month of May Stanton received a letter from the leader of the assembly district asking him to call at his house.

Wondering what the big politician wanted with him, George made the visit.

"I should like to have you accept the captaincy of your election district, Stanton," said the leader. "I find that you are a smart young fellow, well up in local politics, and by long odds the most popular person in your immediate neighborhood. What do you say?"

"What's the matter with Murray, the present captain?" asked George.

"He has just handed in his resignation. He is going out West."

"I hardly think I am equal to the responsibilities of the position. Besides my business—"

"This won't interfere with your regular business in the least. I can guarantee that. We want men for captains who are well liked, and who show some energy in handling their districts. You have been recommended to me by several of the members of the Manhattan Social Club, with which you are connected. But I may also say that I have had my eye on you for some time as a promising young man of my district who deserves to be encouraged. I wish you to understand that our organization appreciates and rewards such services as you have already rendered us."

"But, sir, I have had no experience as a captain."

"That's all right. Murray will take you in hand and put you next to all that you require to know. Then it will be up to you to make a good showing. You will receive all the help from me that I can render. You will, of course, be handicapped by the fact that your district shows a majority in favor of the opposition. This majority was at one time much greater than it is now. Murray succeeded in cutting it down somewhat, and I have no doubt but that you will do even better. At any rate I have decided you are the man for the place, and I want you to accept it."

"Will you give me a little time to consider my answer?"

"Certainly, if you insist, but I shall be much disappointed if you turn the offer down."

"I will let you know inside of a week."

"Very well. I shall be at the General Committee rooms next Wednesday at eight o'clock. Let me have your reply then."

"Very well, Mr. Partridge."

The first thing George did was to call on Murray, the present captain, and have a talk with him.

He wanted to find out just what would be expected of him, then he would be able to figure as to whether he thought he would be able to fill the bill or not.

"Oh, you won't have any trouble at all Stanton. I'd take it if I was you. It will give you a standing with the organization and help you to a job if you ever want one. The leader himself has got to treat his captains well if he expects to keep at the head of the district. Partridge is liable to have a contest at the next primary in September, and it isn't impossible but he may be turned down. It all depends who goes up against him."

"Well, let me know what I have to do as captain."

"Sure," replied Murray, who then proceeded to outline the

more important things an election district captain has to look after.

"Partridge will take you around to the Harlem Police Court and introduce you to Magistrate Dunne. It's handy to know him sometimes when one of your voters gets into a little difficulty that lands him at the station and he is afterward brought before the court. For instance, the other day Janitor McNulty, of the Bensinghurst Apartment House, in my district, laid a man out with a club, and the fellow had him arrested and swore he'd put him through. But he didn't. McNulty sent for me to come to the police station. I found him in a cell and had a talk with him. On his own showing the case looked a little difficult of adjustment; but I wasn't discouraged. I had a talk with the sergeant at the desk, and he assured me McNulty was sure to go up the river. That didn't seem encouraging, did it?"

"No," admitted Stanton.

"Well, after I had got hold of all the facts, I called upon the chap whose head had been opened up and found him in a very bad humor indeed. I talked to him a while and finally convinced him that it would be to his interest not to press the complaint. I assured him that McNulty had a good pull and would get off with a fine. Instead of having the city collect the fine, which I thought would be about ten dollars, I suggested that he accept that amount and an apology from McNulty and call it off. He agreed, and so next morning when the janitor was brought up in court he was discharged at my request because the man was not in court to maintain the charge."

George grinned at this little story, and thought Murray was quite a diplomat in his way.

"As captain you will have a little patronage to dispose of in the way of appointing two election inspectors, a poll clerk and a ballot clerk. These little jobs are much sought after by persons who wish to evade duty, and cannot conscientiously swear that neither they nor their wives are not worth more than \$250, either in personal property or real estate. Then on election day you will employ six or eight helpers to stir up lazy voters, and attend to such other work as you will find necessary for them to do. On the night before election the leader will furnish you with funds necessary to cover these expenses. Some captains hold out a part of this as a personal perquisite; but I never do, as I always find uses for the whole of the money. The captains are not asked for an accounting, for it is presumed the money is spent as intended."

Murray told Stanton a lot more on the subject, and the boy went home with his head full of details and pointers, all based on the present captain's personal experience in the district.

Stanton on the following evening consulted with many of his club members, and they all advised him to take the captaincy if he had a real leaning toward politics.

So on the following Wednesday night he went around to the General Committee rooms at eight o'clock.

Leader Partridge had not yet arrived, but the secretary of the organization had a confidential talk with him and seemed to be much pleased that he had decided to accept the captaincy on trial.

Partridge didn't show up till nearly nine.

There was a mob of small political heelers and others waiting to buttonhole him, and it was some time before George got a chance to speak with him.

At length Partridge called him over and asked him what decision he had arrived at.

"I'll accept your offer conditionally, sir."

"All right. What are the conditions?"

"That if I find I can't handle the district as well as I think I ought to you will accept my immediate resignation."

"I don't think you'll have any trouble making good. Have you seen Murray?"

"Yes, sir."

"He put you up to the ins and outs of the job, didn't he?"

"He did."

"He didn't say anything to discourage you?"

"No, sir."

"Come into the office."

Stanton followed the leader into his sanctum, where the secretary had his desk, and our hero was duly enrolled as captain of the ——— election district of the ——— assembly district, the appointment to take effect in a few days.

Thus George Stanton took his first step up the political ladder which was to lead him to the ladder of fame to

CHAPTER XIII.

ON NAHANT POINT.

On the first of August Stanton was twenty and he received a three weeks' vacation.

He went directly to Shoreham and spent the first week with his mother.

The other two weeks Flossie expected him to spend in her society at the Deering cottage at Sandwich Beach, Nahant, on Massachusetts Bay.

Although George had had little to do with boats for three years, he had not forgotten his old-time skill in handling a sailboat.

The Gull had been leased to a fisherman during its young owner's absence, but the boy easily obtained possession of her for a fortnight's use, as he intended to sail over to Sandwich Beach in her, and use the craft for little excursions with Flossie as the chief, if not sole, attraction.

As Mrs. Stanton had also been invited to spend the balance of the season at the Deering summer cottage, she prepared to accompany her son on the Gull.

"Well, mother, are you all ready?" asked George at nine o'clock on Monday morning, as he came downstairs with his suitcase in his hand.

"Yes, my son," she replied. "You may carry that small trunk down to the boat, and by the time you return I will have my bag ready."

Fifteen minutes later the Gull left her wharf and headed for the point.

An hour and a half later she was off Coffin Island, with its gray lighthouse shining in the morning sunshine.

It was nearly noon when they passed to the south of Deer Island and entered the big bay.

The wind had been so light that it had taken the Gull more than two hours to sail about seven miles.

"At this rate it will take us half the afternoon to reach the beach," said George impatiently. "I guess we'd better stop to lunch, mother. What have you got in the provision basket?"

"Some sandwiches, a small pie and a piece of cake, with a bottle of milk."

"All right. Spread 'em out on the half-deck. I'll tie the tiller so as to keep her head to the wind and then we'll lunch. This is like old times. To say the truth, although I haven't been out here in three years, and that's a good long time, it seems as if it was only yesterday that I put in at Swanscott to escape a heavy blow, because I was loaded down with fish and didn't want to lose any overboard."

About one o'clock the breeze freshened, much to the boy's satisfaction, and the Gull made a dash for Sandwich Beach, which was in plain view.

Nahant is a bold promontory connected with the mainland by narrow ridges of sand and stone thrown up by the ocean.

It was once the most fashionable watering-place in New England, but after the destruction of the big hotel on the point the tide of pleasure-seekers went elsewhere, largely to Swanscott.

The Deerings liked Sandwich Beach because it had all the advantages and none of the disadvantages of a summer resort.

The long beach was hard and smooth, shelving gently and with a splendid surf.

The picturesque cottages and villas gave it a gay appearance.

It was three o'clock when the Gull pulled in at a wharf, and George made her secure.

It was but a short walk from there to the Deering cottage, and the two visitors were received by their friends with open arms.

George and Flossie took a short walk together, and then joined the afternoon bathers.

After disporting a short time in the very light surf they dressed and reached the cottage in time to dress for dinner.

After the meal every one sat out on the veranda until it began to grow dark, when George and Flossie once more wandered off together.

This time their stroll led them toward the rocky bluff, which rears its head 150 feet above the level of the bay.

"Do you know, George, it seems ages and ages ago that I first saw you on Coffin Island," the girl said, as she clung to the boy's arm.

"Why, it's only three years."

"They are three very long years."

"They haven't seemed so long to me. I was remarking to mother, while we were eating our lunch within plain sight of this beach, that it appeared almost like yesterday when I was last sailing in these waters aboard the Gull. Then I was merely an every-day boatman with no prospects. Now I hope I am on the highroad to fame and fortune."

"Why, are you really looking forward to becoming famous some day?" she asked, with a smile.

"Why not? I think it's a great thing to make a name for yourself as well as mere wealth. I should like to be something above the average. For instance, if I could become President of these United States, it would suit me very well indeed."

"Why, the idea!" and the girl gave utterance to a rippling laugh. "Do you really aspire as high as that?"

"Well, I believe in aiming high; then maybe you may hit something worth while. For instance, if I found it unattainable to get myself elected President I shouldn't turn up my nose at a Governorship. If that was out of my reach I wouldn't refuse to become a Senator if the position was offered to me."

"And if you couldn't get that?" she asked roguishly.

"I'd take anything I could get to begin with, of course; but in the end the office of a United States Senator would be what I should covet."

"Then you'd have to live in Washington."

"For a part of the time, yes. I suppose that would suit you, wouldn't it?"

"Me! Why, what would I—"

"You'd have to live where your husband did."

"My husband!" she exclaimed in some confusion.

"That's what I said. I thought it was understood between us that you were going to marry me some day. Have you changed your mind?"

Flossie blushed and looked down on the sand.

"Are you sure that you really want me to?" she asked softly.

"Say, Flossie, how many times do you want me to answer that question? Nearly a year ago, a few nights before you started for your boarding-school, I told you that you were the only girl in the wide world that I cared for. I meant it, just as I mean it now, and as I shall mean it a year or a dozen years for that matter, from now. Of course if you want to back out you've a right to do it. If you've seen some fellow you like better than me—"

"But I haven't, George," Flossie protested, with burning cheeks.

"Well, I'm glad to hear it, for I shouldn't care a rap whether I lived or not if you went back on me."

"I'll never—"

She broke off with a suppressed scream as two men suddenly jumped out into the path before them from behind the shelter of the rocks at the extreme end of the point which they had unconsciously reached.

The actions of the two men were decidedly menacing.

That, coupled with the fact that this spot was the most lonely one at that hour in all Nahant, made the encounter particularly unpleasant.

"What do you want?" demanded Stanton, drawing back and pulling Flossie behind him.

"Whatever you've got about you," replied the foremost stranger roughly.

The voice sounded strangely familiar to his ears, and he looked through the gloom at the speaker.

"Is this a hold up?" he asked coolly.

"You can call it what you please. Hand over your money and other valuables, or we'll make things mighty unpleasant for you and the lady."

"I think we've met before, and that your name is Jim Redmond," said Stanton, not at all dismayed by the threatening aspect of the situation.

The man uttered an oath.

"Who are you?" he snarled, taking a step forward and seizing the boy by the arm.

Stanton shook his arm off.

"It makes no difference who I am, but it will make a whole lot of difference to you and your associate if you don't sheer off and leave us alone."

"Show a little pluck, Phil, and let's see who this chap is," he said sharply.

The speaker's companion struck a match, and as the light flared up Stanton recognized not only Jim Redmond, but his brother Phil also.

Both of them looked to be in pretty hard luck.

The flash of the match also served to bring George's face, and Flossie's, too, into bold relief for an instant.

"George Stanton and Flossie Deering, by all that's lucky!" exclaimed Jim Redmond, with something like a note of triumph in his tones.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE REDMONDS.

As the match flared out and the gloom of night enveloped the four figures once more, Jim Redmond grasped his brother by the arm and held a whispered consultation.

Stanton, paying no further attention to the intruders, drew Flossie's arm within his own and started to leave the spot.

But they had barely taken a dozen steps before Jim and Phil Redmond followed with rapid strides and placed themselves in a position to cut off their retreat.

Stanton, seeing that they meant mischief, prepared to defend himself and Flossie.

He was a strong and stalwart youth, and was confident he would be able to beat off both of these men in a hand-to-hand conflict unless they were armed, and he did not think they were.

"Stand back!" he exclaimed in a determined tone. "If you lay a hand on either of us it will be at your own risk."

"You talk big, young fellow," laughed Jim Redmond tauntingly; "but you'll find that wind don't go down with us. We both owe you a grudge of long standing. You did me out of a fortune and my brother out of a job and a wad of money. Now the time has come when you've got to square up, see?"

"You ought to have been grateful that Mr. Deering did not prosecute you for robbing his brother of that red pocket-book. In any case it would have done you little good. The piece of parchment which you thought so valuable amounted to nothing, for there was no writing on it."

The man laughed mockingly.

"It was of value to me. Perhaps Deering has saved it as a curiosity; if so, he can hand it over to me with a few bones that we need in exchange for his niece."

"What do you mean, you rascal?" cried Stanton angrily.

"I mean that now we see a chance of getting a hold on the old man we're goin' to make the most of it. This young lady will go with us and stay with us till her uncle antes up the parchment and a thousand plunks. Then we'll let her go. As for you we'll let you off this time so you can carry our message to him, and you can thank your lucky stars that I've changed my mind about bayin' you out."

On hearing these words Flossie clung in terror to her companion's arm.

"Don't be frightened, Flossie," whispered George reassuringly. "These rascals shan't molest you as long as I can prevent it, and I fancy they'll have their hands full trying to polish me off."

The gaunt and haggard appearance of the Redmond brothers had given the boy the idea that they were not as formidable as they looked, and consequently he believed he was a match for them both.

But Stanton underestimated his opponents, as he presently discovered to his chagrin.

Their desperate situation, and the prize they saw within easy reach, nerved the two rascals to complete their purpose at all hazards.

While Phil Redmond advanced to secure Flossie, Jim Redmond closed with Stanton.

The girl uttered a thrilling scream, while George made a plucky fight in her defense.

Phil dragged Flossie away from her young protector, clapped one hand over her mouth to stifle her cries, and then bore her off out of sight around the bluff.

Stanton, furious at the success that seemed to be attending the scoundrels, fought with all the energy he was capable of, beating Jim Redmond almost to a standstill and preventing him from making his escape.

But at the moment victory was in his grasp his foot slipped on the damp rocks and he went down head foremost, striking his forehead a blow against a sharp rock that partially stunned him.

Jim Redmond, his face puffed and bleeding from the punishment he had received, took instant advantage of the opportunity thus afforded him, and when Stanton pulled himself together a minute later his antagonist had disappeared.

"The rascals!" he muttered, as he got upon his feet and wiped the trickling blood away from his forehead. "They've carried Flossie off. But they shan't escape me as long as I have breath in my body. I'll follow them and wrest her from their grasp at every hazard."

He knew that Jim Redmond must have followed his brother around the bluff.

That was their only safe path to escape observation for the time being at any rate.

But by following close upon their heels he did not see how they could ultimately make good their escape, burdened with their fair prisoner.

The fact that they might have a boat at hand quite escaped him.

The boy hastened to follow what he judged to be the track taken by the villains.

He jumped from rock to rock and sped across little patches of sand until at last, after rounding the bluff, he came in sight of them again.

They were standing close to the water's edge, and one of them was bending down and seemed to be pulling on something.

As Stanton dashed forward, with blood in his eye, he saw that Jim Redmond had the painter of a rowboat in his hands, while his brother was in the act of stepping into the boat with Flossie in his arms.

The girl had ceased to struggle, and from the position of her head, which lay inertly upon Phil's shoulder, it was apparent she had fainted.

With a shout of anger, George rushed at them.

Jim turned his head at the moment, and seeing how near Stanton was, he gave the boat a shove off, waded out a few feet and sprang into her.

Then seizing the oars, he began to row toward a small sloop that lay a short distance out upon the throbbing waters.

"Come back, you scoundrels!" shouted the boy furiously, dashing into the surf as though he had a mind to swim after the boat.

A mocking laugh from Jim Redmond, that was echoed by his brother, was the only response he received.

It would have been a vain and foolhardy attempt for George to have made any further effort to overhaul the boat, for she was now a dozen yards from the shore, in deep water, and the sturdy arms of Jim Redmond was rapidly widening the distance.

He could only stand there, almost up to his waist in the boiling surf, and watch the abductors of Flossie glide up alongside the sloop, lift the unconscious girl on board and follow themselves.

Jim attached the rowboat's painter to a cleat on the stern-rail, while his brother carried Flossie into the small cabin, where he left her and returned to help Jim haul up the sails.

They then both went forward and lifted the anchor by means of a small drum windlass, when the sloop's head fell off, and she drifted away under the influence of the tide and light wind.

As soon as the anchor was on deck, Jim went to the tiller and put the craft on a course that would carry them up along the northern shore of Massachusetts Bay.

Stanton groaned as he watched the sloop gather headway, and finally disappear in the gloom of the night.

He saw that the rascals had the best of him, and that he was powerless to interfere further with whatever iniquitous project they had in mind.

"My heavens!" he ejaculated, almost despairingly. "To think those two ruffians have Flossie in their power. How she will suffer when she comes to her senses! Can I do nothing to rescue her? Nothing to defeat the villains?"

Suddenly, like an inspiration from heaven, an idea flashed across Stanton's brain.

His boat was at the wharf a mile below.

She was an unusually fast craft for her size.

He would follow the Redmonds in her.

Fifteen minutes later he jumped on board the Gull, cast loose the sails, hoisted them and cast off from the wharf.

Then he headed the sailboat for Nahant Point.

He followed the same tack he had observed them take, at approximately the same distance from the shore.

The wind was so light that George fumed with impatience, since the Gull made very little headway as the moments dragged slowly by.

"The folks must be wondering what has become of Flossie and I," thought the boy as he struck a match, looked at his watch and noted that it was nearly eleven. "I'm sorry now that I didn't delay long enough to send a note to Mr. Deering, briefly explaining matters. Well, it cannot be remedied now. They won't see anything of me again until I fetch Flossie back with me."

After midnight the breeze freshened a bit, and the Gull made better progress.

The sloop ahead, however, had the same advantage, the only question being which boat covered the most water.

All night long Stanton sat with the tiller in his hand, every once and a while straining his eyes into the night in the hope that he might catch sight of the chase.

The gray light of morning at last began to lighten up the sky, and George now became more alert than ever.

A thin mist lay upon the surface of the water, which prevented the boy from making anything out at a greater distance than fifty or sixty yards.

At a little before five the sun peeped above the distant watery horizon, and the mist began to melt and scatter under its warm rays.

The first thing Stanton saw was the shore about half a mile away on the left; then as the seascape broadened he made out the sloop he was in quest of.

She was a mile and a half ahead, and half a mile further out.

The possibility that he might be mistaken in his identity was small, as she showed a new white patch on her mainsail, a mark he had particularly noticed as she got under way off the point.

George secured the tiller and went down into the cabin to get a small telescope which was strapped to the forward end of the cuddy.

Returning with this to the cockpit, he leveled it at the distant sloop, and then all doubt was set at rest, for he easily recognized Jim Redmond seated at the tiller.

Phil Redmond was not in sight, so the boy guessed he was taking a snooze below.

There were quite a number of four-and-afters to be seen in different directions, most of them making directly for Boston.

Jim did not seem to pay any attention to the Gull, which was trailing him, as he had not the slightest suspicion that Stanton was a foot nearer than Nahant at that moment.

Thus an hour passed by and the two boats, under a better breeze, were drawing closer to each other, which showed that the Gull was easily the faster craft.

The wind continued to freshen since sunrise, and at seven o'clock the sailboat had cut down the space between her and the sloop by half a mile.

The Gull was now going along at a lively pace over the sparkling water.

Though a little spray broke over the half-deck at times, not a drop came as far as the cockpit.

The wind was abaft the beam and the sail hardly needed any attention.

There was a short boathook, which made a formidable weapon in the hands of a resolute person, lashed under the seat which circled the cockpit, and George cut it loose so as to have it at hand for instant use.

His intention was to run alongside the sloop, board her and trust to luck to do up the Redmonds.

It was a risky proceeding in light of the odds against him, but he was in that mood that nothing short of a couple of loaded weapons pointed directly at his head would have caused him to waver in the part he had marked out for himself.

At eight o'clock the sloop was less than three-quarters of a mile from the Gull, and George noticed that Jim Redmond cast frequent glances at her, though he appeared as yet to have no suspicions as to her true character.

By peeping under the boom once in a while George was able to note what was going on on board of the sloop.

Presently he saw that Phil had come on deck and was eyeing the sailboat intently.

The sloop was still half a mile in advance when Stanton, taking another look at her, saw Flossie step up out of the cabin and look around.

Phil went up to her presently and spoke to her, pointing toward the cabin.

Flossie objected to going below again, and kept her eyes

CHAPTER XV.

THE CHASE OF THE SLOOP.

When Stanton finally weathered the point he didn't believe that the Redmonds were more than a couple of miles ahead of him.

on the Gull, which it was possible she had identified, as she had sailed in the boat with George many times.

Phil went up to his brother and spoke to him.

Then Stanton noticed that Jim altered the sloop's course so that she began to stand out to sea.

That move compelled Stanton to disclose his true colors.

He moved the tiller over and pointed the Gull's bow directly for the chase.

Of course, the Redmonds discovered at once that they were being followed, and they showed considerable excitement.

Flossie, too, took a sudden interest in the proceedings, and began to wave her handkerchief at the Gull.

The new point of sailing proved to be advantageous to the sailboat, and she closed in very fast now on the sloop.

It wasn't long before the two boats were within speaking distance of each other.

The Redmonds now were able to make out Stanton at the tiller of the pursuing craft, and Flossie made that pleasing discovery at the same moment.

Phil grabbed Flossie and tried to force her below, but the girl was equally determined that she would not go down into the cabin again, for she put up a strenuous fight against it, struggling with all her might against the man.

Phil could easily have overcome her if he had wanted to be rough enough, but he was evidently afraid to hurt her, for fear of future consequences, so he soon found he had his hands full in trying to get her down the short companion-way.

In some way, when the Gull was within fifty feet of the sloop, Flossie managed to escape from Phil's grasp, and then she jumped on to the roof of the cabin and ran forward.

Phil looked after her a moment, and then, evidently making up his mind that she must be recovered and secured below, whether she would or not, he leaped on the cabin, too, and started for her.

Flossie uttered a scream when she saw him coming, and finding herself cornered deliberately sprang overboard as he reached out to grab her.

"My gracious!" cried Stanton, in dismay, heading the sailboat directly for the spot where she had gone down, and grabbing up the boathook.

The sloop, with the aghast Redmonds, flew on her way without making any attempt to come about to her rescue.

Flossie came to the surface a few yards ahead of the Gull, and with wonderful presence of mind she began to swim for the sailboat.

Stanton threw his boat up into the wind, and as she drifted toward the girl he held out the boathook toward her.

When it came within her reach she grasped it, and George drew her close to the side of the boat, so that he could reach her with his hands.

"Let go of the hook now, Flossie; I've got you safe," he said, catching her by one of her arms.

She obeyed obediently.

Then with both his arms he drew her, dripping like a nymph of the waters, into the cockpit.

She threw her arms around his neck and sobbed out:

"Dear, dear George!" and fainted dead away.

The sloop containing the Redmond brothers continued on its way out to sea.

CHAPTER XVI.

TWO HEARTS WITH BUT A SINGLE THOUGHT.

With the Gull to look after, and an unconscious girl on his hands, Stanton was in a quandary.

He allowed the sailboat to drift and attended to Flossie.

By chafing her hands and temples and dashing a tin cupful of water into her face, he succeeded at last in bringing her to her senses.

"Now, Flossie," he said at last, "you will get cold if you stay out here in your wet clothes. Go down into the cuddy, remove all of your garments and cover yourself up in the blankets of one of the bunks. You'll have to stay there till we get back to Sandwich Beach, which won't take long in this snacking breeze."

"Yes, George; but do tell me first how you managed to overtake that vessel."

Seeing that she was determined to know all about her rescue before she went into the cuddy, Stanton gratified her curiosity in as few words as possible.

Flossie then went into the cuddy, he shut the slide over until she had had a reasonable time to take off her dripping garments and turn into the bunk, and then he opened it up again to give her plenty of air.

George could dimly make out her head from where he sat at the tiller, and they managed to carry on a conversation, though both naturally had to speak in a louder key than ordinary.

It took about two hours for the Gull to run up the coast to Sandwich Beach.

There was quite a crowd on the wharf when the boy ran the sailboat in and made fast to the inner side of the pier.

George wrote a brief note to Mr. Deering and sent it over to the cottage by a messenger.

In a short time Mr. and Mrs. Deering and a servant, with a bundle of clothes for Flossie, came down to the wharf and went on board the Gull.

While Mrs. Deering was in the cuddy helping her daughter to dress, George told Mr. Deering the story of their thrilling little adventure.

"The miserable scoundrels!" commented the Boston merchant, with considerable feeling. "To abduct our Flossie in that high-handed manner. You're a plucky boy, George, and you have placed us under a debt of gratitude we shall not forget. We were up all night in a state of anxious suspense over your and Flossie's absence. When the Gull was reported missing from the wharf we naturally thought you had taken Flossie out for a sail, and we felt somewhat relieved until midnight came and you did not return. As the wind was very light we believed you had got almost becalmed off shore; but still we were very anxious as the hours went by and there was no sign of you. After sunrise this morning we became thoroughly alarmed when the two men we had sent on the bluff to look out for the sailboat returned with the word that she was nowhere in sight. We could not understand it, and I telegraphed up and down the coast—over to Swamscot, down to Marblehead and other nearby places in my eagerness to obtain some trace of the Gull. Well, thank heaven, everything is all right now; but we have had a great shock."

"By the way, Mr. Deering, what have you done with that piece of parchment that was in your brother's red pocket-book?"

"It is still in the wallet in my house safe. Why do you ask?"

"Because Jim Redmond was going to include that in the price of Flossie's ransom."

"Did he say so?"

"He did."

"Of what use would it be to him? I suppose he thinks, as we did at first, that it contains some secret writing."

"I told him that the parchment was no use, that it was entirely blank; but he laughed, as if that fact did not disturb him. Do you think there is some secret about it that he is acquainted with, but which you and I could not see through at the time we examined it?"

"It is possible. I will re-examine it carefully when I get a chance, and see if I can make anything out of it."

"It would be a good idea, sir, for I think there must be something in the parchment, after all."

Flossie and her mother now came out of the cuddy, and the entire party started for the cottage.

Next day Mr. Deering went to Boston in the little excursion steamer and swore out a warrant against the Redmond brothers for abduction.

It was three weeks before they were caught by the detective, who spent that time searching for them.

They were jailed and subsequently brought to trial, when Stanton had to come on from New York to appear against them.

The jury found them guilty of the crime and they were sent to the State prison for a term of years.

In the meantime George spent a very enjoyable two weeks at Nahant with the Deerings and took Flossie out many times on the Gull.

The Sunday night before he left he interviewed Mr. Deering, with Flossie's permission, on the subject nearest both their hearts, and obtained the merchant's consent to their engagement.

So he and Flossie were now definitely engaged, with the understanding that their marriage was to come off after three years.

He bought his sweetheart a lovely diamond ring in New York when he got there and sent it on to her.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONCLUSION.

When Stanton returned from his vacation he was enthusiastically welcomed back to New York by all his friends in Harlem.

The primary election was coming on and Partridge was confronted with an opponent, a well-known young lawyer, for the leadership of the assembly district; consequently he looked to all his captains to do their best to have him re-elected for the ensuing year.

He sent for Stanton as soon as he heard he was back in town and had a heart-to-heart talk with him on the subject.

The boy promised to see that he got the majority of the votes to be cast by the party voters in his election district.

He kept his word, induced the bulk of those entitled to vote at the primary to come forward and put in a ballot for Partridge, and thus carried his district for the regular leader by an overwhelming majority.

Partridge, who was re-elected, complimented his new captain on his showing and thanked him for the earnestness and zeal he had displayed in his interest.

At the November regular election George worked hard to keep the Murray voters in line and to add a few more to the total.

His success was greater than was looked for, and his services in the party's interests were duly lauded at a meeting of the General Committee, on which occasion he was called on the platform and presented with a diamond breastpin as a prize reward in consideration of the fact that his district had made the best showing out of the fifty-three in the assembly district.

At the social club election just before Christmas Stanton was elected secretary by a unanimous vote, and assumed the office when he returned to New York after spending the holidays at his home in Shoreham.

Late in the month of May William Miller, the manager of the New York office, was taken seriously ill.

As soon as the news was communicated to Mr. Deering he notified Stanton to assume charge of the branch until Mr. Miller was fit to resume his duties.

This threw a lot of extra work and responsibility on George's shoulders, but he was equal to the emergency, and business went on with the regularity of clockwork.

Mr. Miller returned to the office in season to relieve Stanton for his regular August vacation, but as he was not the same man he had been before his illness, Stanton, it was understood, would hereafter help him out.

Partridge, the district leader, had another contest that year at the primaries, and barely held his own; though Stanton worked like a beaver in his interest.

The opposition candidate did everything he could to win the boy over on his side, but George was true blue and would not desert Partridge.

The leader was grateful to him for his exertions in his behalf and promised to stand by Stanton if the occasion ever presented itself.

That November George cast his first vote, and was quite proud that at last he had attained all the privileges of a full-fledged American citizen.

At the regular annual meeting of his club he was elected its president by a good majority.

"We'll be putting you up for the Assembly next," said one of the members jokingly to him.

Stanton laughed and wondered if he ever would see his name on a regular ballot.

Flossie graduated that year, and Stanton was present, with the Deerings, at the commencement exercises.

He sent his promised wife flowers enough to bury her under.

He spent the entire month of August with her at Sandwich Beach this time, and their wedding was set for the middle of December.

Mr. Miller having decided to retire permanently from the management of the New York office, Stanton succeeded him on the first of September.

Much to George's surprise a movement was developed that year in the district to have him nominated for the Assembly, but he declined to run on the ground that the growing business of the branch office of the hosiery business demanded his constant attention.

In December he was married to Flossie, and they spent a short honeymoon in Florida.

Mr. Deering had forgotten to re-examine the piece of parch-

ment which had remained ever since Rodney Deering's death in its compartment in the red pocketbook.

When Flossie became Mrs. George Stanton he handed the wallet over to her as a remembrance of her father.

One night George came in and found her looking at the blank piece of vellum, which had also slipped his mind.

He took it out of her hand, and then told her how Jim Redmond had made such a strenuous effort to get possession of it at the time of her father's death.

"What could he want with an old time-stained piece of blank paper like that?" she asked her husband in surprise.

"That's what I would like to find out. There seems to be some mystery connected with it that I can't understand. Your father placed great store by it, I know. In fact, he claimed on his death-bed that it represented your fortune."

"My fortune!" she exclaimed, incredulously.

"Yes, dear."

"Why, there isn't a single mark on it—it's nothing but a blank piece of vellum," she said, tapping it with one of her pretty fingers.

"I believe it once contained some writing, and that the ink has faded out for good," replied George. "Once your uncle suggested taking it to a chemist's and seeing if he could revive the ink; but he never carried this idea out."

"Let us experiment ourselves," suggested the young wife. "If sympathetic ink was used, heat may bring it out."

"That's right," answered Stanton, very much interested.

"We might try a hot iron as a starter."

They went into the kitchen and a flat-iron was put on one of the burners of the gas-stove.

After it had become hot enough a thin piece of cloth was placed over the bit of parchment and the iron was applied.

They waited the result with some little excitement.

In a few minutes the cloth was removed and the vellum was found to be covered with writing.

George wrote it all down on a sheet of white paper before the vellum cooled and the writing faded away again.

It proved to be explicit directions as to the locality where a barrel of Spanish doubloons had been buried in the sands of a certain cove on the Isle of Pines, about fifty miles off the southern coast of Cuba, in the year 1665.

"This is evidently what your father meant by your fortune, Flossie," said George. "He obtained this bit of parchment from some person who was unable to make use of its secret himself. Strange that your father made no effort to hunt for the treasure, either. It is clear that Jim Redmond in some way found out about this thing and laid his plans to get hold of the doubloons after your father died. To that end he stole the pocketbook before the expected arrival of your uncle should thwart his purpose. Only that I fortunately happened to look through the lighthouse window that night he would have been able to have carried out his design. Well, dear, some day we'll go on a little trip to the Isle of Pines and see whether we can unearth those Spanish coins."

It was two years before the opportunity came for them to carry out this plan.

Stanton had just been elected to the New York Legislature, and he concluded to take a winter vacation.

So he and Flossie made up a little party for a Caribbean trip, a rich friend having loaned Stanton his schooner-yacht.

The barrel of coin was discovered in the spot described in the parchment, and Flossie suddenly found herself worth \$20,000—quite a little fortune in its way.

Once in politics, Stanton became more popular than ever.

His name was now frequently mentioned in the newspapers, and always to his advantage.

Two years later he was elected a State Senator by a very large majority from the Harlem Senatorial district in which he lived.

He has since been re-elected three times, and may be said to carry his district in his vest pocket, so solid is he in that quarter.

Still his ambition is but partially satisfied, for he hopes some day to represent New York State in the Upper House of Congress, and we have no doubt but he will get there in time, since he is a man who knows no such word as "fail."

In fact, there is no telling but he may reach the Presidency before he dies, thus attaining the very pinnacle of "The Ladder of Fame."

Next week's issue will contain "ON THE SQUARE; OR, THE SUCCESS OF AN HONEST BOY."

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE.

CURRENT NEWS

The condition of the United States Treasury at the close of business July 10 was as follows: Net balance in general fund, \$73,963,616; total receipts, \$1,899,574; total payments, \$2,614,049. The deficit this fiscal year is \$11,211,156, against a surplus of \$13,872,106 last year, exclusive of Panama Canal and public debt transactions.

The longest flagstaff produced in British Columbia is soon to be sent to Great Britain as a gift from the Provincial Government, and it is planned to place it in the Kew Botanical Gardens a few miles out from London. The tree from which it was made was a perfect specimen of fir pine, and the staff, which is 216 feet in length, is without flaw.

Tests with thermometers have been made to show how unhygienic men's top hats are. A thermometer kept in a top hat showed an inside temperature of 90 degrees when the outer air stood at 77 degrees and of 108 degrees when the temperature rose at noon to 90 degrees. In the evening there was a temperature outside of 68 degrees and inside of 88 degrees.

For the protection of either the patient or the surgeon or examining physician, a simple protective mask or shield of paper has been invented by a German surgeon. It is attached by a gummed edge over the nose. The advantage of this form of mask over the usual oilcloth shield, is that it is used but once and then thrown away. Its cheapness and the fact that several may be carried by the physician without trouble adds to its utility.

Amos and the Man notes the fact that in 1898 Spain shipped to the United States with weapons made in large part in Germany and loaded with German made ammunition. This Government at that time, well aware of the provisions of international law on the subject, made no protest. Neither did it take into account the fact that certain distinguished Austrians, obtaining commissions in the Spanish army, fought against the United States in that war.

The total number of passengers who sailed for Europe from this country week ending July 10 was 278 first, 641 second, and 3,658 third class. In 1914 in the week ending July 10, 5,987 first, 7,089 second, and 16,278 third class passengers sailed. The difference caused by the war to the transatlantic traffic in that period was 1,811 first, 6,448 second, and 12,620 third class passengers, a decrease in total of 21,727,680 to the steamship lines.

India is trying an experiment on a large scale with zebu cattle, which have been introduced for the purpose of crossing with the native and hybrid cattle of the country. The zebu is attracting attention from animal breeders of the warmer parts of the world, in-

cluding Texas and other southern section of the United States, largely because of its relative immunity to the disastrous Texas fever. The zebu is a native of the Indo-Malayan region, and experts declare that it was domesticated thousands of years before the Christian era.

According to L'Echo de Chine, the following is the text of a young Chinaman's summary of the events which led up to the war: Now there is a great battle in Europe. This began because the Prince of Austria went to Serbia with his wife. One man of Serbia killed him. Austria was angry, and so wrote Serbia. Germany wrote a letter to Austria, "I will help you." Russia wrote a letter to Serbia, "I will help you." France did not want to fight, but they got ready their soldiers. Germany wrote a letter to France, "You don't get ready, or I will fight you in nine hours." Germany to fight them, pass Belgium. Belgium say, "I am a country; I am not a road." And Belgium wrote a letter to England about Germany, to help them. So England help Belgium.

The Nile, besides giving fertility to Egypt, tempering its climate, and promoting its commerce, is an inexhaustible reservoir from which the inhabitants draw no inconsiderable portion of their food. Fishing boats are seen continually, and although the fish caught around Cairo are very soft and flabby, with a muddy flavor, the natives show no disgust in eating them, even after they have reached a stage which Europeans would consider spoiled. In a "feluka," as the native boats are called, a fisherman prepares his hooks for to-morrow's catch, bread or old meat being used for bait. The hooks having been baited, they are attached to lines and in the evening are put out in the stream with gourds for buoys. Some of the hooks are not baited, and many fish are caught on these when the lines are drawn in the next morning.

A man living near Litchfield, Minn., has a horse that takes his children to school in Litchfield every morning, says the "Springfield Republican." When the "kiddies" get out of the buggy they tie the lines to the dashboard and the horse goes home alone. He always makes the return trip without any trouble. When he arrives home he always stops at the same place and waits there until someone leads him to the barn. A number of horses were employed to haul material from a large building excavation to a point some squares away. It was only necessary to station men at the loading and unloading points, the intelligent animals passing between the two places without the direction of drivers, thus effecting a considerable economy in wages. Another horse, the property of a Chicago man, which was recently stolen, after the lapse of a few days turned up at his proper home, drawing a spick-and-span wagon and proudly wearing a brand new harness. Inquiries by the owner of the horse for the proper owner of the wagon and harness have evoked no response, which, upon reflection, should not cause any surprise.

JOLLY JACK JONES

—OR—

KNOCKING ABOUT THE WORLD

By ED. KING

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XVIII (continued)

The whistle sounded sharply and at no great distance away.

Dashing on down the steep path, they soon came up with the negro, who stood leaning against a tree, panting like a dog.

"Well, Caesar? Well?" cried Shellboyer. "What are you stopping here for?"

"He done gone an' vanished somewhere 'bout here, marse!" panted the negro. "Which side he went I dunno."

"Where did you see him last?"

"Right about here. I t'ought sure I had him, but just den I done gone stub mah toe and tumbled over on mah nose. Gosh a-mighty, it hurt, dough! When I got up he were gorn! Yo' kin see clean way down de road a mile or more, boss, and dar's dem pressipisses below here, so if he tuk to de side ob de mountain, which he muster done, dis yere muster been de place."

Jack saw a clew at first glance, but he hardly knew whether to call Shellboyer's attention to it or not.

His sympathies were all with Mr. Lozee, but then the man was unquestionably a maniac, and to leave him to wander about the mountain alone would be only to leave him to his death.

So Jack reasoned, and he pointed out the broken twigs on the ground on the right-hand side of the path.

"You're right, boy, and sharp of you, too," said Shellboyer. "Come on!"

"Say, Marse Shellboyer, may I be 'lowed to make one suggestion?" asked Caesar, holding back.

"Well, what is it? Out with it quick," snapped Shellboyer. "We are losing time."

"Yo' know de boss. Ef he hears de banjo played like dis yere boy kin play it, wouldn't s'prise me none ef he come right out ob de woods an' up to de music. Say, wouldn't it be worth trying something like dat?"

"That's what it would," growled Shellboyer. "Go back and get your banjo, Jack. Tell that cracker with the gun I sent you, and why. Lose no time, boy. You will be well paid for all you do in this case. Here, take the whistle. You can blow when you get here, and we'll answer. Now run as though Satan himself was at your heels."

Jack sprinted up the mountain then, and having good wind was able to keep up the pace till he reached the house.

The cracker at the door made no objection to his entering.

He looked around for Lemo, but seeing nothing of her,

went upstairs and through into the other part of the mansion, got his banjo and returned.

"What's that for?" growled the cracker, as he passed out.

"That's the boss' orders," replied Jack.

"Huh! He better hev' taken me along. I'd cotch him," growled the cracker. "That nigger don't know nothing about the mountains, and the boss does. More'n likely he's tuk to 'Bijah's Cave.'"

Jack made no answer, but ran on down the steep slope as fast as he could go.

He soon reached the place where he had left Shellboyer and Caesar, when he stopped and blew his whistle.

The answer came promptly from a considerable distance away.

Jack plunged into the woods and ran on.

It was rough going.

Besides the fact that the place was a perfect tangle of trees and bushes, it was all rocks, and one misstep would have sent him rolling down the mountainside.

Again he stopped to blow his whistle, but before he could raise it to his mouth two hands were suddenly thrust out and seized him.

In an instant Jack was tumbled back on the rocks, and the woods resounded with a wild yell.

CHAPTER XIX.

JACK HAS HIS HANDS FULL.

Jack looked up to see Mr. Lozee bending over him.

"Ha! I've got you! I've got you!" exclaimed the maniac. "The boy with the banjo! Good! You shall play to me in my royal palace. You shall be the band when I march across the sea with my army of a billion men!"

Like most lunatics, Mr. Lozee was possessed of wonderful strength.

He seized Jack and slung him over his shoulder like a sack of meal, and then started down the mountainside.

But don't think for a moment that Mr. Lozee forgot the banjo.

Nothing of the sort.

He caught the keys in his teeth before flying hold of Jack.

Now it was dangling from his mouth as he bounced from rock to rock.

the situation was desperate—horrible! Though he knew Lawyer Shellbeyer to be a villain of the first kind, Jack would have given anything to be with him.

He expected every instant to be dashed to pieces. He dared not call for help, and so try to attract Shellbeyer's attention. He lay half resting on Mr. Lozee's back, on his shoulder.

The madman had his right hand across his throat. "He can stop my wind in a minute," thought Jack, "and, jingo, that won't do. I must keep quiet, for if he misses footing all is lost!"

This is what he dreaded most.

The side of the mountain was densely wooded, the trees hanging out of a mass of broken stone.

For a person to pick their way through it all would have been difficult enough.

Here was Mr. Lozee running, dodging stones here, dodging around them there, and again springing up upon one, leaping from stone to stone.

So wonder Jack's heart was in his mouth, as the saying is.

It was a terrible ordeal.

That it did not end in death for both was a wonder.

The end, however, was different from that.

Guided by that mysterious power which seems to protect rages and drunken men from harm, Mr. Lozee came almost down to the bottom of the deep valley lying below High-Top Hall in safety, when all at once he stumbled, fell forward, and he and Jack went over a trifling descent of about fifteen feet, falling heavily upon the rocks below.

It knocked Jack senseless for the moment, for he struck on the back of his head.

But Jack Jones was not the kind that die easily.

In a moment he was on his feet again, a bit dazed and a little bruised, but otherwise all right.

"Heavens! It's a wonder I wasn't killed," he gasped. "He's dead all right, though! My banjo! Hello! Here he is, and not hurt a bit, thank goodness! What's to be done now?"

The first thing was to look after Mr. Lozee.

The madman lay on his face, bathed in blood.

Jack never doubted that he was dead when he turned him over and laid him out upon a bit of grass beyond the rocks.

Mr. Lozee was motionless, however.

There was a deep wound on the left temple.

It was a mortal wound, Jack knew.

Jack examined his arms and legs.

There was no harm done.

A moment later, looking down at the madman with the head wound, he said to himself:

"Perhaps he has been hurt," thought Jack. "Poor wretch! I must try to help him if I can."

There was a bundle near by, and Jack managed to drag it over to him.

He then pulled his hand, carefully, across the madman's forehead, feeling for the wound.

Feeling in Mr. Lozee's pocket, he found a large silk

handkerchief, with which he carefully bound up the wound.

He had just finished when Mr. Lozee opened his eyes.

There was an entirely different look in them.

He fixed them upon Jack and muttered:

"This must be death! Oh, I am so glad."

He continued to stare at Jack, who picked up the banjo, thinking to quiet him with the music.

"Yes; yes!" murmured the maniac. "Play, boy! Play!"

Jack started right in on a lively ragtime song.

Mr. Lozee listened with close attention.

The puzzled look in his eyes increased.

When the song was ended and Jack started on another, he held up his hand.

"No, no!" he exclaimed. "The same! The same! Play it over again. Sing the same thing till I tell you to stop!"

Now this was all very different from what had been.

Before he had kept calling for different songs and instrumental pieces.

And while the millionaire was intensely excited, he was still very quiet, compared to what he had been.

Jack could not help feeling that some change was working in his brain, and so it was.

Jack did the ragtime song six times before attempting to speak.

As he started in on the sixth Mr. Lozee's eyes closed and he seemed to sleep.

It was only for a minute, however.

Suddenly he opened his eyes again when the music stopped.

"Boy, have I been crazy?" he asked.

"You have been sick, sir," replied Jack.

"Sick! Yes! How did I come here?"

It was hard to answer him.

Jack did his best.

Mr. Lozee had not wholly forgotten what had happened.

He spoke of one thing and another—he seemed to remember as one remembers a dream.

He asked Jack his name, and then before Jack could give it he called him Jack Jones.

He asked about the other boy with the banjo. And where was the nurse? Then he sat up and buried his face in his hands.

Jack began playing a fandango very softly.

He played it over and over for more than half an hour, and still Mr. Lozee never raised his head.

Jack thought he must be asleep, but when he stopped at last Mr. Lozee suddenly looked up.

"Jack Jones," he said, "listen to me. I've been mad, but my reason is now returning. I think the blow on the head did it. What has happened lately at High-Top Hall is drifting away from me, and I am remembering things I had forgotten. I have had a terrible experience, boy, and my wife is the cause of it all. She is a wretch. A wicked, wicked woman! Tell me, have you seen a man named Shellbeyer at the Hall?"

"I certainly have, sir," replied Jack. "I think I will help to clear your mind."

(To be continued)

ITEMS OF INTEREST

NO TENTS IN GERMAN ARMIES.

It may or may not have been noticed by our readers that in the photographs of the theater of war, at least on the German side, no tents appear. That is one of the innovations which modern warfare has brought in the German army. Tentage used to form a not inconsiderable part of the impedimenta of armies, and this elimination lightens not a little the task of the quartermaster's department. The German plans contemplate always an offensive, presumably to be carried out in the enemy's country, and involve the billeting of the troops in the homes of the inhabitants of the conquered country.

GOT GLASSES AND TRENCH, TOO.

J. H. Morgan, lecturing at University College, London, on "Five Months with the Expeditionary Force," said that he had heard the following story of a subaltern who now has the Victoria Cross:

The subaltern had a pair of field glasses of which he was extraordinarily proud. One day his company had been compelled to fall back on their support trenches owing to a sudden German attack. All at once the subaltern uttered an exclamation and bolted through the communication trench. A sergeant went after him, and came back to the commanding officer to report, "Sir, he has recaptured the trench." The commanding officer collected his men and again advanced to the fire trench, where he found the subaltern holding up the Germans with two revolvers.

The commanding officer congratulated the subaltern, but pointed out the recklessness of his action. "Sir," was the reply, "I wanted to get my glasses back."

USING NATURAL DYESTUFFS.

Manufactures of natural dyestuffs report a decided stiffening in the demand for their products. During the past fortnight inquiries have been pouring in to the domestic color makers from fabric manufacturers in all sections of the country, many of whom heretofore have been users of the German coal tar products. Several of the natural color plants are running at full capacity in order to keep up with the demand. According to the president of one of the largest and oldest natural color concerns, manufacturers of cotton goods anticipate no great amount of trouble in changing their dyeing processes so as to use the natural products. As a matter of fact, this man said, the bulk of orders received by his plant are from the cotton cloth producers. An improvement is noted in the supplies of dyewood, fustic and other dyewoods from the West Indies and Central America, as well as in the amount of dyewood extract being imported. While heavy supplies have been contracted for by the color manufacturers, the shortage of shipping continues to be something of a handicap.

WHERE MONEY IS USELESS.

The Island of Ascension, in the Atlantic, belonging to Great Britain, is of volcanic formation, eight miles by six

in size, and has a population of about 450, says the "London Herald." It was uninhabited until the confinement of Napoleon at St. Helena, when it was occupied by a small British force. It is 250 miles northward of St. Helena. Vast numbers of turtles are found on the shores and it serves as a depot and watering place for ships.

Ascension is governed by a captain appointed by the British Admiralty. There is no private property in land, no rents, no taxes and no use for money. The flocks and herds are public property, and the meat is issued as rations. So are the vegetables grown on the farms. When an island fisherman makes a catch he brings it to the guard room, where it is issued by the sergeant major. Practically the entire population are sailors, and they work at most of the common trades. The muleteer is a Jack tar, so is the gardener, so are the shepherds, the stockmen, the grooms, masons, carpenters and plumbers. Even the trapper, who gets rewards for the tails of rats, is a sailor.

The climate is almost perfect, and anything can be grown.

THE DEADLY HOWITZER.

Surgeon-Major Lesghintseff, who is back from the battle in Galicia, says that seven-eighths of the wounded were from shells, half of these were from big caliber shells and the rest from field howitzers and field guns, including shrapnel shells. "Bullets," say this authority, "have no role. The rifle is the infantryman's toy. The infantryman does not fight. When the big guns have begun the fighting he occupies the trenches which they have won."

The effect of the Skoda 42-centimeter guns, known as "the Pilseners," is worse than the effect of the Krupp "Thick Berthas." The Skoda shells weigh 2,800 pounds. Their normal trajectory is seven kilometers, and on level ground they penetrate twenty feet before exploding. The explosion occurs two seconds after impact. The "Pilseners" are howitzers and, except in diameter, do not resemble the Krupp 42-centimeter mortars.

A "Pilsener" shell kills every one within 150 yards, and kills many who are further off. The men are killed by gas breaks in the partitions and roofs of the trenches. Scores of men who escape metal fragments, and showers of earth are killed, lacerated or blinded by the pressure of the gas. Men who are only a short distance away are torn to bits. The gas gets into the body cavities and expands, tearing the flesh asunder.

Sometimes only the clothes are stripped off, leaving intact the boots; of men close by not a fragment remains. The clothes disappear and only small pieces are found. If the shell is very near the trench, the men are killed as if they were struck by lightning. Men who appear in such explosions are reported missing, as there is no proof of their death.

THE NINE WONDERS

— OR —

THE ROUGH RIDERS OF THE DIAMOND FIELDS

By **GASTON GARNE**

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER X (continued)

"You're an honest man," called out the umpire, "and I will rule you out."

"All right," returned Teddy. "I never kick," whereupon a strong-lunged man on the grand stand sprang up and roared out:

"Three cheers for the honest Rough Rider!" It is doubtful if a single human being in that vast crowd failed to cheer. Every member of the Red Stockings waved his hat in the air and cheered, too, and the captain ran to the plate and shook his hand.

"That's all right," said Teddy, laughing. "It was a good call, but I thought I could make it. Better luck next time."

Tom Knatt took up the bat, and after one strike was batted on him smashed a high ball and was caught out. The Patton quickly met with the same fate, and the nine retired to the field.

Once more in the box Tom Knatt stood perfectly still for nearly a minute, waiting for the batsman to get ready. The pitcher sent the ball at him with a zigzag course that so puzzled him he did not attempt to strike it. The second went the same way, but the third he struck at and missed.

"Out!" called the umpire, and the batsman threw down his bat in disgust.

The second man to take it up got to first on a bunted ball. The third sent him to second by a hot grounder to the right.

The fourth, after two balls were called on him, smashed the ball away to right field where it was caught out by Jack Tilman.

The fifth knocked a splendid ball to center field, and the pitcher, on second base passed third and sprinted for home. The runner dashed to the home plate, caught the ball and put it to sleep within three feet of it.

"Out!" called the umpire, and the Red Stockings retired to the field.

The third inning resulted in no run for either side. The fourth and fifth went the same way, although both sides exchanged some, eliciting round after round of applause from the vast multitude.

At the beginning of the sixth the Red Stockings had three runs on the board, while the Rough Riders had none. The Rough Riders had two runs to their credit.

Ed McCoy was again the first at the bat for the Rough Riders, and smashed out a ball to right field where it was caught out. Knatt started a similar fate at the bat, but sent it first. Patton got to first base on a hot grounder

to left; Dick sent him to second by smashing the ball to right field, resting himself at first.

McCoy after two strikes were called on him, smashed the ball away to right field, and sprinted like greased lightning to first and thence to second. The ball was sent to the home plate to head off Crenshaw.

By a strange mishap it bounded away from the pitcher, who attempted to catch it, and Dick got home.

To the astonishment of the thousands who were looking on, McCoy dashed to third, and the ball was sent to put him to sleep there. He slid over the plate on his stomach, and in doing so his shoulders knocked the baseman's feet from under him, sending him rolling in the dust, whilst the ball bounded away nearly fifty feet.

Quick as a flash Ed sprang to his feet and dashed like lightning to the home plate, across which he sprinted as the vast crowd stood on their feet roaring out encouragement. He had made a four-bagger in spite of the desperate efforts of the Red Stockings to head him off.

The home team was dumbfounded, whilst the Rough Riders seized Ed, raised him to their shoulders, and began a bit of by-play that set the crowd roaring. They tossed him about to each other as though he were a baby, after which they laid him on the ground and rolled over on him like a lot of playful kittens on a bed of catnip.

The hilarity of the crowd was almost hysterical. Even the rattled Red Stockings had to laugh, though the score now stood against them four to nothing. Many of their backers became panic-stricken and made desperate efforts to hedge their bets.

Jack Tilman was the next at the bat, but was promptly caught out, and the nine retired to the field.

It was a rare thing for accidents to happen on the grounds with such skilled players as the Red Stockings, but to have two take place in the space of a few brief seconds, giving their opponents two runs was something absolutely stunning. For the first time in their career as a team they were completely rattled. Their chagrin was all the more keen on account of the taunts they heard from some of their losing backers.

To make it still worse the youngest member of their team was older than the eldest among the Rough Riders.

"Say, you red-legged fellows!" yelled a man in the crowd, "what in thunder is the matter with you—that you let a lot of gobs come out of the woods and wipe up the dirt with you?"

None of the team made a reply, but Ed McCoy sang out to the sport:

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself to strike a whole nine when they are down. They are doing the best they can."

"It looks to me as if they were doing the worst they know how," returned the sport.

"It isn't that," said Eddie, "but because we are doing our best, and we are going to keep on doing it. Why didn't you put up your money on us?"

"Oh, shut up," was the reply: "you make me tired!"

"Don't get tired yet," laughed Teddy. "Wait till the last inning is played and then you'll want somebody to fan you."

"Play ball!" sung out the umpire, and Tom Knatt in the box began delivering spiral puzzlers that quickly sent the nine to the field. Not a ball was touched by the three who took up the willow.

No wonder the Red Stockings were demoralized, for never before had they run up against such a snag.

In the seventh inning three of the Rough Riders were caught out on high balls, while the Red Stockings managed to twice knock out two-baggers and make one run, on which they received rounds after rounds of applause from the crowd.

In the eighth inning the Rough Riders failed to make a run, whilst the Red Stockings again succeeded in adding one more run to their score, leaving it at the beginning of the ninth and last inning 4 to 2 in favor of the Rough Riders.

This suddenly revived the hopes of the Red Stockings and their backers, and the excitement increased to a fever heat.

Once more at the bat at the beginning of the inning, Teddy Robinson got to first base on a ball sent to left field. Knatt sent him to second, but was himself put to sleep at first. Patten sent him to third, and stopped at first himself.

Crenshaw smashed out a two-bagger for himself and Billy, but Teddy was put to sleep within a foot of the home plate. Patten and Crenshaw were now on second and third bases, when McCoy took up the willow to bring them home.

He smashed the ball to center field, but was caught out, and Patten and Crenshaw had to return to their bases.

CHAPTER XI.

HOW TOM MADE FIFTY DOLLARS—"NOW BRING ON YOUR BALL TWIRLER."

"Jack," said Teddy, as Tilman took up the bat, "bring 'em both home and run up the score to a round half dozen."

"I'll do my best," replied Jack, and the next moment he struck at the ball and missed.

"One strike," called the umpire.

The second went the same way, and another strike was called on him.

"What's the matter with you, Jack?" Teddy asked him.

"There must be a cross-eyed girl in the crowd looking

at me," he replied, at which there was a great roar of laughter.

When the third ball came he smashed it to left field, and Patten sprinted across the home plate.

"Out," yelled the umpire, as the fielder caught it.

"That settles it," said Teddy, "and the score stands for two."

"Oh, we have another chance yet," said the captain of the Red Stockings.

"So you have," assented Teddy, "but it'll do you no good."

"We'll see about that," was the reply, and the Red Stockings went to the bat for the last time.

The first man was quickly pitched out, but the second one smashed out a two-bagger, reaching second just in nick of time by a tremendous slide.

The third moved him up to third, whilst the fourth sent him to die within a few inches of the home plate.

"Two out," called the umpire, as the fifth man took up the willow and smashed out a two-bagger that sent the man on the second base across the home plate.

It electrified the great crowd, for it narrowed the score down to 4 to 3.

The sixth man smashed out a hot grounder to right field, moving the man on second up to third. A crowd of men yelled to the seventh man at the bat to bring it home and tie the score.

Two strikes were called on the batsman, who then smashed the ball skyward. Jack Tilman near second base quietly stepped forward, gazing up at the ball waiting for it to come down. Not one of the Rough Riders ventured near him, knowing that Jack would collar it without any trouble.

In the meantime the man on third base dashed across the home plate. Men, women and children cheered, but those who had staked money on the game backing the Red Stockings groaned way down in their shoes, for their money depended on whether Jack Tilman would collar or catch it.

It nestled snugly in his hands, and the Red Stockings were beaten.

A wild, tumultuous scene ensued among those who had not risked anything on the game. They whooped, roared and cheered over the splendid performance of the Rough Riders. They had won the game by splendid play. No money had been made against any decision of the umpire, and a game up to this point in a game where no money was at stake.

The vast crowd slowly dispersed, yet thousands lingered a long time in the inclosure in the hope of getting a better view of the Nine Wonders.

It was hard work to get the boys off the field and out of the inclosure to their carriages. When they returned to their hotel they found such a crowd in front of it that the police were compelled to make a passage for them.

They at once retired to their rooms, where they exchanged their dust-covered uniforms for the new ones they had purchased in Utica.

Down in the office of the hotel Parry Patton, as manager for the term, had instructed the clerk to send the visitor cards up to the boys.

(To be continued)

TIMELY TOPICS

Eastern railroad has adopted the suggestion brought by one of its engineers, that engine inspectors be magnifying glasses, in order that they may be readily detect such damage and imperfections on the wheels as flaws and cracks. In this is seen the value of the safety-first campaign, in that the suggestion came from an employee, and it is to be noted the company suitably rewarded him by presenting him with an "honor button," and granting him a month's absence with pay.

A new branch of the U. S. Department of Agriculture known as the States Relation Service, and dates from 1915. Its function is to represent the Secretary of Agriculture in his relations with the state agricultural and experiment stations, and to carry on the work of the department in connection with farmers' co-operative education work, investigations relating to agricultural products, farmers' institutes, the relative utility and economy of agricultural products used for food, clothing and other uses in the home, and the maintenance of agricultural experiment stations in Alaska, Hawaii, Porto Rico and

The present Office of Experiment Stations became a branch of the new service.

most to fishermen is a novel contrivance recently invented for using a single live minnow for an end in fishing for maskinonge or bass. A strong, clear glass tube is equipped with metallic rings, to which are attached clusters of hooks, and a loop wire. A live minnow is placed within the tube, which is filled with water. A line is attached to the wire loop. Upon casting the minnow into the water, the tube magnifies the minnow and attracts the large fish. Fresh water is constantly admitted into the tube, and the minnow is not suffocated nor hurt in any way, no matter how long it is cast. The glass tube, filled with water, floats the moment it is submerged.

On Sunday, 12, of 98 Heyward place, Passaic, N. J., a boy named Stephen, "follow the leader" with a number of his friends in the afternoon. He was the leader. About dusk he came to the tallest telegraph pole in this section of the town. Made of two poles spliced together, it is 100 feet high. One of the boys dared Stephen to climb the pole. He went. He reached the first cross-arm. When, at his comrades below, touched a live wire. A shock of 2,800 volts of electricity were flowing. He fell at a moment and then plunged to the ground. His friends were sure Stephen was killed by the electricity. His leg bone was broken by the fall. They ran for help, and the police got doctors. The doctors found a broken leg, a burn on one arm, a burned patch on his face, and he remained for a few minutes Stephen was taken to the hospital.

The South African war lasted for two years and eight months, and cost in all \$1,250,000,000. The forces of Great Britain numbered 448,000 and were made up of 337,000 from these countries, 49,000 from the colonies, 52,000 raised in South Africa, and 10,000 of a garrison. This number seems quite small when compared with the army which Britain has in the field at the present time. The number of officers and men reported killed amounted to 7,782, while 23,342 were reported wounded; and disease and accidents were responsible for 13,773 deaths. These accidents were of almost every conceivable kind, and included men killed by the bursting of guns, derauling of trains, kicks from horses; while it was also asserted that several had been devoured by lions. The majority of those who died from disease were victims of enteric fever and dysentery. In all, the number of deaths was under 22,000.

If you are of average weight, height, and appetite and live to be seventy-five you will have eaten fifty-four tons of solid food and fifty-three tons of liquid. That is about 1,300 times your own weight. If you were to stack the bread you will have consumed in this number of years the pile would equal a fair-sized building. The amount of butter you will have used on this bread would come to a ton and a quarter. If you are a lover of bacon and were to stretch that which you have eaten out in single slices four miles would be the length. Five tons of fish and 12,000 eggs would stand to your credit, while the normal cheese eater would easily have consumed 400 pounds. The vegetables you will have eaten would fill a train three miles long. You will have consumed some 10,000 pounds of sugar and 1,500 pounds of salt. If you are a smoker you will have used about a half-ton of tobacco in pipes and will have smoked 1,000,000 cigarettes.

The use of aeroplanes for bringing diamonds from the mines to the coast is one of the features in the big developments in aviation now being planned for German Southwest Africa. This country is a difficult and dangerous one to traverse by land, not only on account of the jungles and other natural obstacles, but because of the robber bands with which it is infested. It is now necessary to send troops to guard each shipment of diamonds, and the aeroplanes, which will carry mail as well as diamonds, will be a saving both in time and money. In addition to this service the German Government is arranging to establish an aeroplane service for scout work and other military duty in the interior, and with this in view aeroplanes are being shipped to Africa and soldiers are being trained in the art of flying. An important part of the airmen's work will be the carrying of doctors about the colony, and with this means of transportation it will be possible for doctors to reach, within a few hours, remote villages that it now takes several days to reach.

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GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

C. E. Jones, a farmer, of Petersburg, Ind., noticed for some time that something was cutting off young corn near the ground. Recently he discovered crawfish pinching it with their claws and taking the stalks to their holes for food, he says.

A syndicate of Norwegians has accepted a commission from the German meat trade to furnish 10,000 live reindeer, which are to be delivered alive in Berlin during the summer and fall, for slaughtering. An experimental shipment has already been made, and proved entirely satisfactory to the Berlin butchers.

The Russian Government has purchased the ice-breaking steamer Bruce from the Reid Newfoundland Company, St. Johns, N. F. It is understood the Bruce, with her sister ship, the Lintrose, bought by Russia last winter, will be used in the White Sea to keep open later than usual the channel to the port of Archangel.

The department of defense has awarded a contract for the saving of the German cruiser Emden which was sunk off Cocos Island, in the Indian Ocean, by the Australian cruiser Sydney. The contractors say the raider can be easily floated, and will be in Sydney, N. S. W., by Christmas. The Emden will be exhibited. Recruiting in Victoria has been very successful, and New South Wales is about to begin a campaign for men.

When grass roots and mother earth come in contact with bare feet there is a sort of soothing electrical current transmitted through the body that rebuilds and invigorates the entire system, is the theory and practice of J. M. Halger, of Carlton, Okla. Eight months in each year he spurns the pressure of leather on his feet, and with trousers rolled up nearly knee high, attends to his farm. He has been in Kansas City with no shoe or boot accompaniment and did not feel half as strange as people who looked at him.

Charged with the murder, in 1868, of a wealthy cattle man and his son, and facing the allegation that he was a member of a notorious counterfeiting gang which operated

in this section during the period just subsequent to the civil war, Bates Huntsman, seventy, member of a family prominent in this section, was arrested in Redford, Iowa. Two other warrants were issued. The issuance of the warrants followed an attempt by Samuel Anderson, of Lucas, Iowa, to file a civil suit against the men named in the warrants, forcing them to give him a fourth share of \$90,000, said to have been found twelve years ago in a chest buried on a farm near Siam, Iowa. A gang of counterfeiters, in the fall of 1868, it was said, attacked and killed a wealthy cattleman and his son, took the \$90,000 and buried it on Anderson's farm. According to residents, Jesse James and his band made a foray into Iowa in an attempt to find the treasure, but failed.

GRINS AND CHUCKLES

"Bridget, what did you say to Miss Smith when she called?" "I told her you were out this toime for sur ma'am."

"I wish," she sighed, "that I could see myself as other people see me." "Gracious," replied her fond friend, "why are you satisfied to let well enough alone?"

Nell—Maude has suddenly discovered that she needs exercise, so she goes out for a walk every day. Bill—Yes, I heard that she had a lot of new clothes.

Sunday-school Teacher—Now, Johnny, why did the children of Israel sigh for the flesh pots of Egypt? Johnny—Maybe Moses gave them breakfast food.

Husband (in an aside to his wife)—If you can't find out of some more anecdotes of our children's smartness let me go home right away, for they're getting ready to tell me things about their own.

Jenny—Here comes Jack, auntie. I wish you would come down and stay in the room. Auntie—Why? Jenny—I'm afraid he's going to propose and I can't trust myself. He looks so poor and handsome.

Mrs. Green—Now, tell me truly, do you believe it will do any benefit to punish children? Mrs. Berch—Certainly. You cannot imagine how much better I feel after I have given Tom and Mabel a good trouncing.

Willie—Say, pa, didn't you tell me the other day that it was wrong to strike any one smaller than yourself? Pa—Yes, Willie, that's what I said. Willie—Well, I was thinking you'd write my teacher a note to that effect. I don't think she knows about it.

Magistrate (severely)—Prisoner, how did you have the audacity to break into this man's house at midnight and rob him? Prisoner (piteously)—But, your worship, the time I was before you you wanted to know how I could have the audacity to rob a man in broad daylight. What do you expect me to get in my work?

THE FRAGMENT OF A BOND.

By Horace Appleton

I had seen the man often before, but couldn't call him by name.

"You knew me better, which, on the whole, isn't to be regretted at."

"Mr. Bright!" said he, grabbing me by the arm, "you heard the horrible news?" I was just on my way to my lodgings. I want to retain you in this matter. I want the whole thing thoroughly sifted to the bottom, even if I have to pay every cent of the expense myself."

"You forget, sir," said I, "that you haven't yet told me what this horrible news is—I don't even know your name."

"Of course—of course," said he, "that's very true; my name is Creigg—John Creigg. I'm a broker and house agent in St. Paul street."

"Yes; I've heard of you," said I, and, indeed, so had most everybody in our town, for Mr. Creigg stood high as a man, of strict integrity and ample means.

"Undoubtedly," said he, "and you've also heard of Mr. Whitelock of Grand avenue."

"Of course," said I.

"Last night he was foully, in fact brutally, murdered."

"Possible!" said I, very much astonished. "Such a thing could hardly have taken place and I not heard of it."

"Nevertheless, it is true," said my informant; "but it was only discovered about a half-hour ago, by his valet, and direct to me."

"Then the police know nothing of it as yet?" said I.

"I've been to the station and notified them, and it was there that I happened to think of you, and decided to secure your valuable services at once."

"I seem to take a great deal of interest in this matter, Mr. Creigg," said I, curiously.

"Why shouldn't I?" said he; "Mr. Whitelock was my friend. I had charge of all his real estate matters, collected all his rents, besides doing much other business for him."

"It is quite necessary for a complete understanding of my friend's case," said I.

"Mr. Whitelock was an old man—say sixty-eight—well advanced in years."

"And survived his wife and children by some years. His only heir to his vast possessions was a little grandchild, a child, who was now at a private boarding-school in the country."

"Whitelock kept only three servants about him, his wife and two women."

"The women slept on the third floor, the valet had a room adjoining with his master's."

"Whitelock had been to pay a visit to his little grandchild in the country before this upon which his body was discovered. I saw his servant back to town with an im-

portant private message for Mr. Creigg, at the same time telling his valet that he need not return to the country as he would come home by himself during the next day.

This man whose name, by the way, was Augustus Walker, had faithfully delivered the message to Creigg, and then returned home to the house on Grand avenue.

Creigg had said that he should be obliged to call there in order to carry out his employer's instructions, and about an hour later did so, and remained in Mr. Whitelock's private room for the better part of two hours, when Walker himself showed him out of the house, and locked the door.

A little later Walker retired for the night. The two female servants had already done so.

None of the three was in any way disturbed until morning.

A little before half-past seven, Walker started to put his master's private room in order, wishing to have it ready when he should return.

Before going to bed the night before he had turned the key in the lock. He was now startled to find the door unfastened. He entered the room. What a sight met his gaze!

There, upon the floor, lay his master, whom he had supposed to be fully forty miles away.

His clothing was terribly disordered, and there was a wound, made by some heavy instrument, extending from the front part of the head down the forehead to near the bridge of the nose, and his throat had literally been cut from ear to ear!

In one of the hands of the dead man, which were tightly clenched, there was found the merest fragment of paper that appeared to have been torn from a greenback or a United States Government bond.

This was the information I received at police headquarters.

I asked for that fragment. It was at once delivered to my keeping. Then, turning to the superintendent, I asked:

"How many know about this little piece of paper?"

"Only Butler and myself," was his reply.

On arriving at the house I found everything just as it had been described to me; but in the meantime a very important discovery had been made.

A safe that was built into the walls of the private apartment had been opened and robbed—of how much it could not immediately be ascertained—but of a large amount it was certain; a part of which must have been in Government bonds, as Whitelock was known to be a large holder of those securities.

I went to work on the case, as I thought, systematically, but, as I must confess, for a good while with poor results.

Months passed, and still we seemed no nearer the truth than at first. Creigg always stood ready to give me advice and assistance, but neither resulted in throwing any light on the mystery. None of the stolen property had been traced.

We had long since learned the amount and numbers of the bonds, but we could not learn that any of them had ever been put upon the market.

I had had a close watch kept on Walker, but we never caught him napping, although Creigg had seemed to lean

to the opinion that he knew more of the matter than we appeared to suppose.

The case was at this stand, when suddenly one morning Creigg burst into my room before I was dressed, and, in eager haste, cried:

"Walker's gone! He's off!"

"Gone where? Where's he off to?" I asked, in an absent sort of way.

"To Europe—I'm sure of it," said my eager visitor.

"All right; and if there's any occasion for it, I'll go there, too."

"And if you go, I shall go with you," said Creigg.

As I entered the superintendent's office that day, he looked up, and with more interest than he generally manifested, said:

"Oh, Bright! I suppose you've heard that Walker's off?"

"Where has he gone to?"

"Took a steamer from New York to Liverpool. What do you think of it?"

"I don't like to say just yet, Mr. Markham, if you'll be so kind as not to press me," and then, looking at him earnestly, I asked: "But what do you think of doing?"

"I want you to follow him by the next steamer, and so bring this matter to a focus," said he, "for, to tell the truth, it's a disgrace to this office."

"I am likely to have a companion on this trip."

"What—who?" he exclaimed in wonder.

"Mr. Creigg."

"Very well," he said again in that tone which told me to go.

And I went—went directly to my private room, locked myself in, sat down on a low chair, placed my elbows on my knees, and thought—thought for two long hours as man never thought before.

At the end of that time the whole thing was plain as day to me. But I saw one thing; I'd got a cunning customer to deal with. That night I started for New York; Creigg went with me. The next steamer that sailed for Europe took us as passengers.

We reached London in ten days after we had started from home. I soon paid a visit to Scotland Yard, and arranged everything with the authorities there. I was alone on that occasion.

We had put up at a third-rate hotel, not far from Scotland Yard, and much frequented by those connected with the police. This was to have things handy, you know. Our rooms were adjoining. There was a door of communication between the two, but, of course, this was kept locked.

A night or two after my visit to Scotland Yard, I heard mysterious sounds that seemed to come from Creigg's room. It set me to thinking. The next night, while we were seated together in the barroom, I said:

"Creigg, this is a little dull, ain't it? Suppose we have something warming?"

"I've no objections," said he.

And so I asked the barmaid to let us have a private room. We were soon accommodated, and the materials for mixing a punch were placed before us. I took it upon myself to do the mixing. I said nothing, but in less than two hours I helped Creigg to bed.

After that I wasn't long in getting the door of com-

munication between our rooms open, and locking the outside doors. Then I went into a systematic examination of the man's room and property: "What did I find?"

Wait and you'll soon hear now. Luckily, the next day he was too sick to leave the hotel. But he never suspected what I had been up to the night before.

I received a message from Scotland Yard and went there immediately. But I left an officer, in citizen's dress, behind me, to keep an eye on things at the hotel.

As I expected, Walker was in the hands of the police, and I soon got to the bottom of all he knew; but I requested that, for the present, he might be detained at the office.

I also requested that one or two more good men should be sent to the hotel. I then paid a visit to the United States Minister's. The reason you will easily guess. After that I went back to the hotel. I asked for Creigg.

"He's in the private room you occupied last evening," said the barmaid.

I went there. He was seated in a high-backed armchair, his feet spread out before him, a pipe in his mouth, and on the table at his side were all the necessaries for mixing a cheerful beverage.

"Hallo, old boy, where have you been all day?" I was greeting.

"Oh, just looking around a bit," said I.

"Well, take that other chair," said he, "and draw up and have something. Here, just let me ring for another glass and pipe."

"Creigg, I believe I've found out something."

"Ah!" said he, carelessly, taking his pipe from his mouth, and blowing out great wreaths of smoke. Then, in languid tones, he asked:

"And what may it be?"

"I've matched a piece of paper," said I.

"The deuce you have!" said he, with a little laugh, and still pulling away at his pipe. "Well, Bright," he continued, after a moment or two, "I really shouldn't wonder if you made a stir in the world yet—before you die."

"Stranger things than that have happened," said I, taking my pipe in my left hand, and at the same time holding up a bond, from the top edge of which the missing fragment had been torn. "Do you see that?"

"Yes, what of it?" he asked, without taking the trouble to remove his pipe.

"Why—nothing," said I, "only I took that, with some worth more, and a number of things belonging to you, from under the flooring in your room while you were drunk last night, and the missing fragment of this bond was taken from the hand of Walter Whitelock the morning he was dead on the floor of his private room."

Well, in a word, he wilted—gave right up—submitted peacefully as a lamb. Told me all about it afterwards.

Got into a tight box. Saw his way out of it by means of Whitelock. Opportunity offered. Fixed the watch while he was there in the early part of the evening. Got in after the house was quiet. Managed to get the safe open, and was just looking over the bonds when he was surprised by Whitelock. From the time he knew that his employer was in the room to the time he knew he himself was a murderer seemed no more than a single instant.

Creigg was hung for his crime.

NEWS OF THE DAY

The last lap on a 41,000-mile course, which it took him 12 years to run, was finished the other week by Harry, the horse of Edwin Bailey, city mail carrier, Beloit, Wis. The animal actually died in the harness while making the lap and it made for nine years.

The new aerological station of the Weather Bureau is fully established at Drexel, Neb., and its staff is busy in the kite field. At the auxiliary station, at Fort Omaha, operations have been made for a series of observations with balloons-sondes, including the installation of a gas plant, at which the hydrogen for the balloons is produced electrolytically. Since the closing of Mount Weather, the administrative office of the bureau's upper-air work has been in Washington.

The Hartford Rubber Works of Hartford, Conn., has announced that it will pay full wages to all its employees who are members of the Connecticut National Guard when they are absent from its factories on duty with their regiments. The National Surety Company, of New York City, has also announced a similar policy, and adds that the performance of duty will not be deducted from vacation time. This is the proper and practical attitude toward citizen soldiers to perform their military duties, and it is hoped the movement will spread all over the country.

With two college degrees and an acquaintanceship with the letters abroad, John McLaren, A.B., A.M., is working as a stone cutter in Cambridge, Mass., for \$2.50 a day. Both his degrees are from the University of Glasgow and he speaks seven languages. He was a prominent labor organizer in England. He is a friend of George Bernard Shaw and adviser of Kier-Hardie, the labor leader and member of Parliament and a great admirer of Mrs. Weston. His present employment is due to his philosophy of life. He is known as No. 287 and has been on the job for six months.

Louis Repetti, sixty years old, an Italian, of Little Rock, Ark., who has amassed a fortune in the United States in commission business, has twelve small potatoes that cost him \$7,010. According to stories Repetti told the police he was out that sum as the result of the operations of another Italian named Ricci, for whom a warrant has been issued. Ricci and Repetti deposited securities in boxes of similar appearance, but when Repetti opened his box he found it had been switched and instead of his money being in it the box contained twelve potatoes. Ricci has not yet been apprehended.

Vinton, Ind., claims to have one of the oldest persons in the State. Mrs. Sarah Haden will be 105 years old on her birthday. She is hale and strong for a person of such advanced age. Mrs. Haden was born in what is now West Vir-

ginia, July 17, 1810. Her name before her marriage was Sarah C. Doan. When 20 years old she was married to Richard R. Hayden, about her own age. Soon after their marriage Mr. and Mrs. Hayden moved to Greene County and settled in the woods when this country was a wilderness. Eight children were born to them. She assists in the household duties, and often spends a morning hoeing in the garden.

An all-metal extensible picture hanger is now in use which serves instead of the usual cord. To a ring which serves to suspend the hanger from an upper nail are attached two decorative tubes of gilded copper containing telescoping rods at the lower ends. Such rods are curved into hooks at the bottom so as to be attached to eyelet screws in the back of the picture. This gives a good means of adjusting the height of the picture by the sliding of the rods in the tubes, and they are fastened by set screws. The present device gives a more decorative effect than the usual cords and unlike these it is not subject to deterioration.

A pile of more than 60,000 pounds of prism powder, which had been condemned and was used as fertilizer at the Naval Academy dairy farm, at Gambrills, twelve miles from Annapolis, exploded the other day and caused the death of John McCleary, a young Scotchman, and Alfred Addison, a negro. The powder was being ground in a special crusher. The explosion was communicated to the main pile, 200 feet away. The two men were at work at the crusher and were instantly killed. The powder was used as fertilizer on account of its large proportion of nitrate of potash. It is believed that a stone or nail was thrown into the crusher with the powder and caused a spark.

Wood-flour to be mixed with the fodder of domestic animals and even added to the diet of human beings was advocated by Prof. G. Haberlandt in a recent address before the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences. The Literary Digest prints a synopsis of this address, from which it appears that "there is a large amount of nutritive substance in the wood of deciduous trees, a less quantity being found in that of conifers." Especially in winter the sap-wood of the elm, beech, maple, poplar, alder, ash, birch, aspen, linden and others contains sugar, starch and oil. Prof. Haberlandt found 23 per cent. of starch in the sap-wood of a thirteen-year-old elm in March. The dead heart-wood is almost destitute of these nutritious substances, but the smaller branches and twigs are rich in them, while the bark contains too much tannin. The human stomach cannot, however, dissolve the tough cellulose coating of the cells that contain the starch, oil and sugar, so the wood must be ground to a flour before it can be digested. The stomachs of cud-chewing animals can, however, digest it without such fine grinding.

INTERESTING ARTICLES

GRENADES REPLACE BAYONETS.

The fierce and costly fighting at Festubert has brought into the open more than any other event during the war the absolute supremacy of the explosive. The Germans appear to possess an unlimited supply of bombs or grenades—metal canisters at the end of a wooden handle. They use these even on occasions when our men would use the bayonet, throwing them point-blank at a yard or two distant. But in spite of their skill in the use of these explosives and the generous supply the British win by personal dash when it comes to a question of close fighting.

It is not till the trench or breastwork that now so often takes the place of a trench is won that the Germans get the full reward of their skill in explosives. They inflict the greatest loss by the skilled use of the double explosive shell, that is the shell which combines the high explosive with shrapnel.

NEGRO TURNED WHITE.

A negro who in fifteen years had become as white as the purest blooded white man was seen at the Frisco station, Muskogee, Okla., the other night. The man was recognized by a negro acquaintance of former years. The negro's name was given as Sam Williams from Parsons, Kan.

As the white negro turned from the ticket window he saw and spoke to another negro, who immediately recognized him. Williams' face and hands are perfectly white and his hair, though woolly, is white.

The story of the marvelous change of color was quickly told. Almost twenty-five years ago when Williams was a boy about fourteen he was afflicted with scarlet fever. When he recovered white spots, no larger than dimes, were visible all over his body. For years the spots increased in size, until finally, at the end of fifteen years, the negro was perfectly white.

INDUSTRIES FOR THE IGOROTS.

Steps are being taken by the United States Government to furnish Igorots and other mountain peoples of the Philippines with means of obtaining a livelihood when the work upon the public improvements on which many of them have been engaged is completed.

Special efforts are being made to extend the interest of these natives in agriculture. Meetings with the headmen of the various mountain folk are being held by the Government agents, at which the problem is taken up. For some time the Bureau of Agriculture of the Philippines has been supplying selected seed rice and the blight-resisting tobacco to all of these people who will be induced to plant them. This practice will be continued.

In addition to these efforts to increase the agricultural productions of the mountain peoples, plans are being perfected for introducing better-bred horses, cattle and hogs among them. To this end the Bureau of Agriculture is preparing to put the needed stock animals of the various

at the disposal of as many as will avail themselves of their use.

New crops are also being introduced, including mongo, a bean crop from India, which is widely used for enriching the land; corn, which already forms an auxiliary food crop to rice, and camotes, a kind of sweet potato.

Silk culture is also being introduced. At Bontoc, Kianggan, and other points in the Mountain Province the industry has been started by the use of silkworms furnished by the Bureau of Science, mulberry trees supplied by the Bureau of Agriculture, and teachers secured by the Bureau of Education.

QUEER HAPPENINGS.

George Harmon, Jr., nine, thirteenth child of Mr. and Mrs. George Harmon, Hempstead, L. I., his father also a thirteenth child, is struck by auto and unhurt.

Women Sunday-school teachers at Cedar Manor (N. J.) Chapel quit because they cannot choose superintendent.

Arthur Williams, caught in \$1.85 theft in Manhattan, jumps from window and suffers two broken legs, cracked spine and three years in prison.

Louisa Boehnert and her father, Henry Boehnert, are to marry on same night, in same house, No. 73 Charles street, Jersey City.

Celesti Ferrer's will leaves two parrots to niece with \$300 for maintenance.

Liars' Club, of New York business and professional men, opens clubhouse at Sea Gate.

Burglar at Bryn Mawr (Westchester County) railroad station leaves note congratulating woman agent who had removed cash.

Joseph Mulligan, ironworker, No. 2430 Broadway, sustains mere bruises by eight-story fall because he lands on John Garrick, who is in Knickerbocker Hospital.

Will of Mrs. Hulda Ann Wickes, of Patchogue, L. I., provides money for funeral procession, with horses.

Paul Goldsmith, of Commack, L. I., has shirt torn by lightning, and is uninjured.

If John Whiteman, of New Brunswick, N. J., will make a home for mother-in-law, she will recover sixteen years' salary as domestic under his wife's will.

William Van Horn, "Rattlesnake Bill," arrested for 156th time, is freed from jail on promise to never enter Stanhope, N. J., again.

Frank Ryan, Jamaica, L. I., arrested on warrant for flying Irish flag, says he was only giving the building an airing. Decision reserved.

Residents of the Bay end of River avenue, Patchogue, L. I., annoyed by bathers who disrobe in the open under a bedsheet, are erecting signs "Bathing Prohibited."

When Mrs. Concino Silvio, of Hoboken, returned home late she was beaten by her "star boarder" whose supper was delayed.

TRICK MATCHES.



Consist of a Swedish safety box, filled with matches, which will not light. Just the thing to cure the match borrowing habit. Price, 5c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

IMITATION GOLD TEETH.



old plated tooth, shape made so that it fit any tooth. Price, 5c., postpaid.

F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

MARBLE VASE.



A clever and puzzling effect, easy to do; the apparatus can be minutely examined. Effect: A marble can be made to pass from the hand into the closed vase, which a moment before was shown empty. This is a beautiful enameled turned wood vase.

Price, 20c.

BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

THE MAGIC NAIL.



A common nail is given for examination, and then instantly shown pierced through the finger; and yet, when taken out, the finger is found to be perfectly uninjured, and the nail is again given for examination. Nicely finished.

Price, 10c. by mail, postpaid.

BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

THE HELLO PUZZLE.



Can you get the ring off? This puzzle is the latest creation of Yankee ingenuity. Apparently it is the easiest thing in the world to remove the ring from the block, but it takes hours of study to over the trick, unless you know how it is.

Price by mail, postpaid, 10c.; 3 for 25c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

JUMPING CARD.—A



pretty little trick, easy to perform. Effect: A selected card returned to the deck jumps high into the air at the performer's command. Pack is held in one hand. Price of apparatus, with enough cards to perform the trick, 10c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

SMALL COLLAPSIBLE PENCILS.



The name is a joke. It looks small enough while it is hanging on a watch-chain, and it is very handsome design, prettily nicked, and very compact. Just hand the end of it to your friend, it begins to telescope until he imagines there is no end to it. Besides its ability to be fun, it is a good useful pencil, too.

Price, 15c. each, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

LINK THE LINK PUZZLE.



The sensation of the day. Pronounced by all, the most baffling and scientific novelty out. Thousands have worked at it for hours without making it, still it can be done in two seconds giving the links the proper twist, but you know how, the harder you twist them tighter they grow. Price, 6c.; 3 for 15c.; dozen, 50c., by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

WARD'S PACK OF TRICK CARDS.



A full pack of 53 cards, but by the aid of the instructions given, anyone can perform the most wonderful tricks. Many of the feats exhibited are truly marvelous, and astonish and amuse a whole audience. Positively no sleight-of-hand. The trick is in the cards. Price, 35c. by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

SLIDE THE PENCIL.



The pencil that keeps them guessing. Made of wood and lead just like an ordinary pencil, but when your victim starts to write with it—presto! the lead disappears. It is so constructed that the slightest pressure on the paper makes the lead slide into the wood. Very funny and a practical joke.

Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid; 3 for 25c.

F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.



APPEARING BILLIARD BALL.—A solid billiard ball, beautifully made, can be made to appear in the bare hands with the sleeves rolled back to elbows. Very fine and easy to do.

Price, 35c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE JOKER'S CIGAR.



The biggest sell of the season. A real cigar made of tobacco, but secreted in the center of cigar about one-half inch from end is a fountain of sparklets. The moment the fire reaches this fountain hundreds of sparks of fire burst forth in every direction.

to the astonishment of the smoker. The fire is stage fire, and will not burn the skin or clothing. After the fireworks the victim can continue smoking the cigar to the end. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c.; 1 dozen, 90c., mailed, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE CANADIAN WONDER CARD TRICK.



Astonishing, wonderful, and perplexing! Have you seen them? Any child can work them, and yet, what they do is so amusing that the sharpest people on earth are fooled. We cannot tell you what they do, or others would get next and spoil the fun. Just get a set and read the directions. The results will startle your friends and utterly mystify them. A genuine good thing if you wish to have no end of amusement.

Price by mail, 10c.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

STRING PUZZLE.



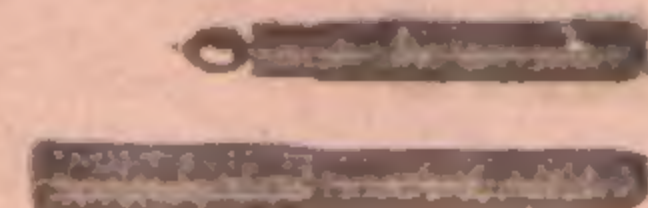
This puzzle is a wonder. It consists of two pieces of wood. A hole is bored through the upper end of both. A red string passes through the holes. Take a knife, insert it between the

wooden blocks and cut upwards. You separate the pieces of wood, and the string is apparently cut in two. Close the blocks together, seize an end of the string, and you can pull the entire cord through the holes, absolutely—not cut. Very mystifying.

Price, 12c. each, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE SURPRISE FOUNTAIN PEN.



A novelty of the greatest merit! It looks just like a genuine fountain pen. But it isn't. That's where the joke comes in. If

you take off the cover, a nice, ripe, juicy lemon appears. Then you give the friend you lend it to the merry "ha-ha." You might call it an everlasting joke because you can use it over and over again. Price, by mail, postpaid, 10c.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

NEW TEN-CENT FOUNTAIN PEN.



One of the most peculiar and mystifying pens on the market. It requires no ink. All you have to do is to dip it in water, and it will write for an indefinite period. The secret can only be learned by procuring one, and you can make it a source of both pleasure and amusement by claiming to your friends what it can do and then demonstrating the fact. Moreover, it is a good pen, fit for practical use, and will never leak ink into your pocket, as a defective fountain pen might do.

Price, 10c. each by mail.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE FRIGHTFUL RATTLESNAKE!



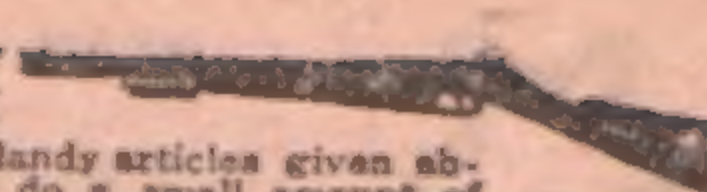
To all appearance it is a harmless piece of coiled paper with a mouth-piece attachment, but upon placing it to one's mouth, and blowing into the tube, an imitation snake over two

feet in length springs out of the roll like a flash of lightning, producing a whistling, fluttering sound that would frighten a wild Indian. We guarantee our rattlesnake not to bite, but would not advise you to play the joke on timid women or delicate children. Each snake packed in a box. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c., mailed postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

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This Dandy Pump Action RIFLE



and many other dandy articles given absolutely free to boys who will do a small amount of work for us. We send two Fac Simile Confederate States \$10.00 bills free to every boy answering this advertisement. Write today.

HUNT & CO., DEPT. A. E., 160 N. FIFTH AVE., CHICAGO, ILL.

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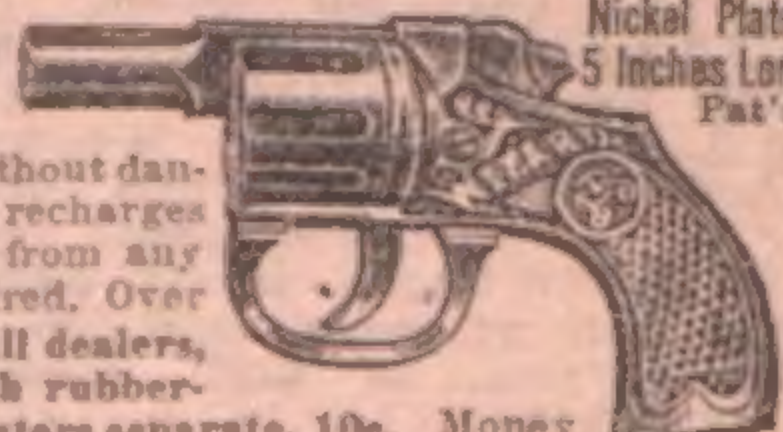
Pack of \$1,000 Stage Bills, 10c; 3 packs, 25c. Send for a pack and show the boys what a WAD you carry.

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Will stop the most vicious dog (or man) without permanent injury.



Perfectly safe to carry without danger of leakage. Fires and recharges by pulling trigger. Loads from any liquid. No cartridges required. Over six shots in one loading. All dealers, or by mail, 50c. Pistol with rubber-covered holster, 55c. Holsters separate, 10c. Money order or U. S. stamps. No coins.

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Old Coins Wanted. \$1 to \$600 paid for hundreds of coins dated before 1895. Send 10c for our illustrated coin value book 4x7; get posted. Clarke & Co., Box 95, Le Roy, N. Y.

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This is a double whistle, producing loud but very rich, harmonious sounds, entirely different from ordinary whistles. It is just the thing for bicyclists or sportsmen, its peculiar double and resonant tones at once attracting attention. It is an imported whistle, handsomely nickel plated, and will be found a very useful and handy pocket companion. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c.; one dozen, 75c., sent by

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Learn to swim by one trial

Price 25 cents, Postpaid

These water-wings take up no more room than a pocket-handkerchief. They weigh 3 ounces and support from 50 to 250 pounds. With a pal anyone can learn to swim or float. For use, you have only to wet them, blow them up, and press together the two ring marks under the mouthpiece.

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SPRING TOPS



Something new for the boys. A top you can spin without a string. This is a decided novelty. It is of large size, made of brass, and has a heavy balance rim. The shank contains a powerful spring

and has an outer casing. The top of the shank has a milled edge for winding it up. When wound, you merely lift the outer casing, and the top spins at such a rapid speed that the balance rim keeps it going a long time. Without doubt the handsomest and best top in the market.

Price 12 cents each, by mail, post-paid

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

CARD THROUGH THE HAT TRICK



With this trick you barrow a hat, and apparently shove a card up through the crown, without injuring the card or hat. The operation can be reversed, the performer seemingly pushing the card down through the crown into the hat again. It is a trick which will puzzle

and interest the closest observer and detection is almost impossible. It is so simple that a child can learn how to perform it in a few minutes.

Price 10 cents each, by mail, post-paid

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.



STAR AND CRESCENT PUZZLE.

The puzzle is to separate the one star from the linked star and crescent without using force. Price by mail, postpaid 10c.; 3 for 25c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO.,
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WINDOW SMASHERS.



The greatest sensation, just from Paris. A most wonderful effect of a smashing, breaking, falling pane or glass. It will electrify everybody. When you come home, slam the door shut and at the same time throw the discs to the floor. Every pane of glass in the house will at once seem to have been shattered. Price, by mail, postpaid, 35c., a set of six plates.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

TRICK CARD CASE



A simple looking case like those containing an ordinary pack of playing cards. But the top card is only a dummy. Hidden inside the seeming pack is an ingenious mechanism; when you pull out the pack a trigger is released and explodes a cap with a loud report. Perfectly harmless and yet a source of no end of fun.

Price, 25c. each, by mail, postpaid.
FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

THE LITTLE GEM TELEPHONE.



The transmitter in this telephone is made from the best imported parchment; with ordinary use will last a long time; can be made in any length by adding cord; the only real telephone for the money; each one put up in a neat box; fully illustrated, with full directions how to use them. Price, 12c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

INDIAN FINGER TRAP.



A couple can be joined together and their struggle to be released only makes matters worse. It will hold them as tight as a rat-trap, and the more they try to pull away, the tighter it grips. Our traps are extra long. Price, 10c. each; 3 for 25c. by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

PIN MOUSE.



It is made of cast metal and has the exact color, shape and size of a live mouse. Pinned on your or somebody else's clothes, will have a startling effect upon the spectators. The screaming fun had by this little novelty, especially in the presence of ladies, is more than can be imagined. If a cat happens to be there, there's no other fun to be compared with it.

Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid; 3 for 25c.
FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

RAVELLING JOKE.



Yards upon yards of laughs. Don't miss it! Everyone falls for this one. It consists of a nice little bobbin around which is wound a spool of thread. You pin the bobbin under the lapel of your coat, and pull the end of the thread through your button hole, then watch your friends try to pick the piece of thread off your coat. Enough said! Get one! Price, 12c. each, by mail. Postage stamps taken same as money.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

IMITATION CUT FINGER.



A cardboard finger, carefully bandaged with linen, and the side and end are blood-stained. When you slip it on your finger and show it to your friends, just give a groan or two, nu so it up, and pull a look of pain. You will get nothing but sympathy until you give them the laugh. Then duck! Price, 10c., postpaid.

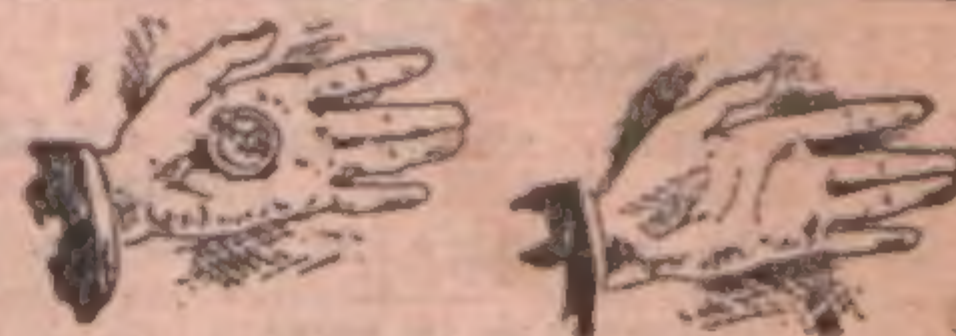
H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

FLY-APART PENCILS



The party who monkeys with this pencil suddenly finds it falling to pieces in his hands. You can scare the wits out of him by saying he will have to pay for it. But it is easy to assemble the pencil again in readiness for another victim. You can have 60 yards of joy to the minute with this innocent-looking little device. Price, 15c. each, by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.



VANISHING COINS.—A coin held in the palm of the hand is made to vanish when the hand is closed. Only one hand used. No practice required. Wonderful effect. Price, 25c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.



TRICK COIN HOLDER.—The coin holder is attached to a ring made so as to fit anyone's finger. The holder clasps tightly a 25c. piece.

When the ring is placed on the finger with the coin showing on the palm of the hand and offered in change it cannot be picked up. A nice way to tip people. Price by mail, postpaid, 10c. each.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

JUMPING JACK PENCIL.



This pencil is made up in handsome style and looks so inviting that every one will want to look at it. The natural thing to do is to write with it, and just as soon as your friend tries to write, the entire inside of the pencil flies back like a jumping jack, and "Mr. Noisy" will be frightened stiff. It is one of our best pencil tricks and you will have a hard job trying to keep it. Your friends will try to take it from you. Price by mail, postpaid, 10c. each.

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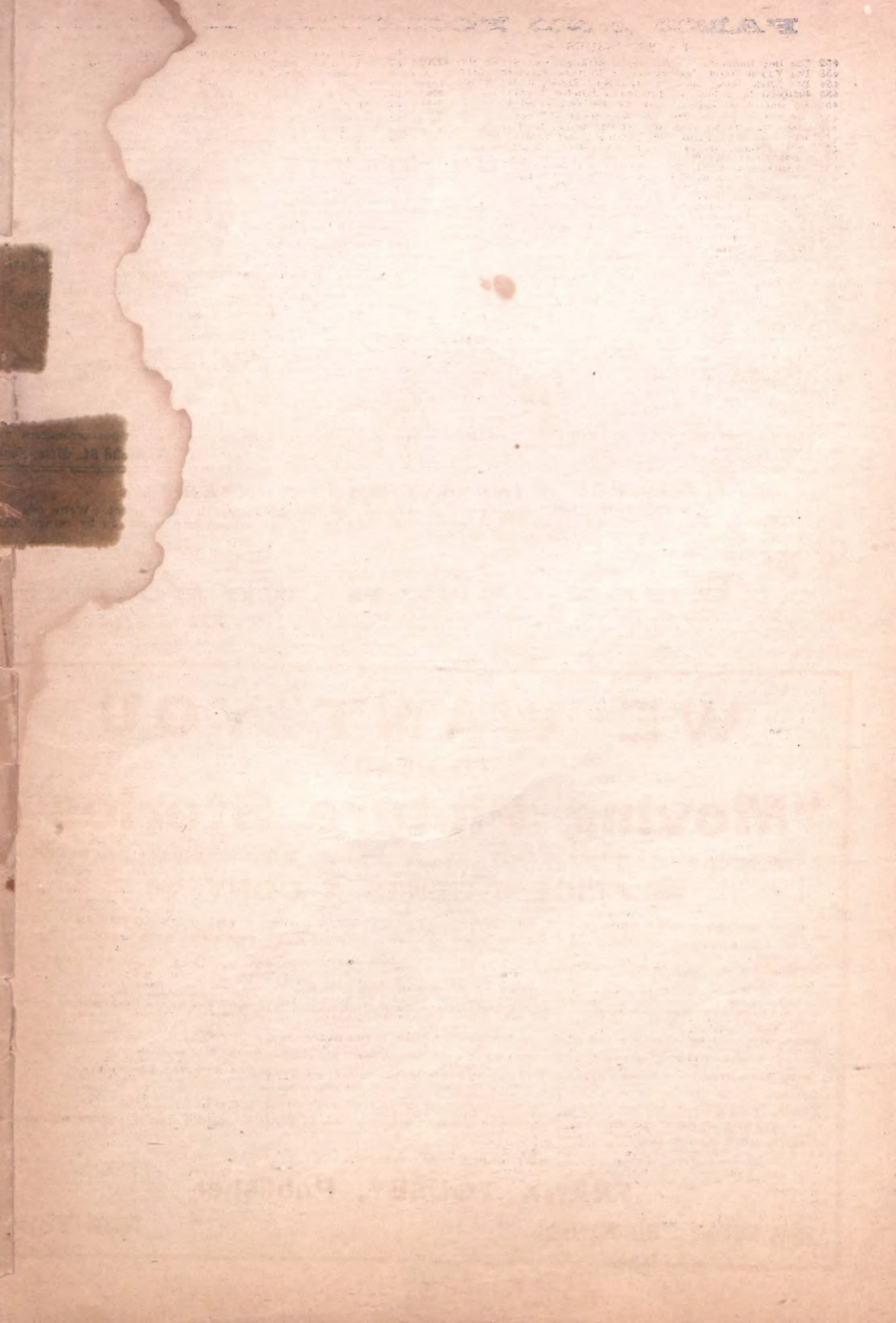
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